*The most Reverend*
D^r. JOHN TILLOTSON
*late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury.*

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SIXTEEN

# SERMONS,

Preached on

# Several Occasions.

By the Most Reverend

Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,

Late Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

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A

# A SERMON

Preached on

# Chriſtmas-Day.

## Haggai II. 6, 7, 8, 9.

*For thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land: And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. The ſilver is mine, and the gold is mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

THE Author of this Prophecy was the firſt of the three Prophets, which God ſent to the

People of *Israel* after the Captivity; and this Prophecy contains ſeveral Meſſages from God, to the Princes, and Elders, and People of *Israel*, in which he reproves their ſlackneſs and negligence in the building of the Temple, and encourageth them thereto, by the promiſe of his aſſiſtance, and tells them, that however in reſpect of the magnificence of the Building, and the rich Ornaments of it, it ſhould be incomparably ſhort of *Solomon*'s Temple, (which ſome that were then alive had ſeen in its glory) yet in other reſpects, it ſhould far excel it; for the time would come, that this ſecond Temple ſhould be graced with the Preſence of the *Meſſias*, which would be a greater Glory to it, than all the Riches of *Solomon*'s Temple.

And this is fully expreſt in the words which I have read unto you, *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land: And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. The ſilver is mine, and the gold is mine,*

*ſaith*

*ſaith the Lord of hoſts. The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

Now, that it is ſome very great thing which is here foretold and promiſed, for the Honour of this ſecond Temple, no Man can doubt, that conſiders in what a ſolemn manner it is here expreſt; this great and glorious Title, *the Lord of hoſts*, being no leſs than five ſeveral times uſed within the compaſs of theſe four Verſes; the like Inſtance whereto is not, perhaps, in the whole Bible: *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth*, verſe 6. *And I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, verſe 7. *The ſilver is mine, and the gold is mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, ver. 8. And twice, ver. 9. *The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* So that by the ſolemn manner of expreſſing of it, we may imagine, that it is ſome very great thing which is

ſpoken of, and ſuch as the like had never been before; and ſuch was *the incarnation and coming of the Meſſias.*

I know that the Modern *Jews* will by no means have this Text to be underſtood of the *Meſſias*, and not without cauſe; for he that is ſpoken of in the Text, was to come into the ſecond Temple, which hath now been deſtroyed above 1600 Years ago; and they do not believe the *Meſſias* to be yet come; and therefore whatever ſhift they make, they muſt interpret this Text, of ſome other Perſon than the *Meſſias*: But then it is plain for what Reaſon they do ſo, it being evident from their own *Talmud*, that the Ancient *Jews* did underſtand it of the *Meſſias*; but being harden'd in their Unbelief, they pervert all thoſe Texts whereby they might be convinc'd, that *Jeſus* our Bleſſed Saviour was the True *Meſſias.*

And indeed, whoever carefully conſiders the ſeveral Expreſſions and Circumſtances of this Prediction, cannot underſtand it of any other. To make this Evident, I ſhall explain the ſeveral Expreſſions

Expreſſions in the Text, *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Yet once, it is a little while. Yet a little while*, ſo it is in the *Hebrew*. *Yet once more*, ſo the LXX render it, and ſo it is quoted from the LXX in the New Teſtament, *Heb.* 12. 26. and this Senſe the *Hebrew* word may likewiſe bear, and our Tranſlation of the Text takes them both in, *Yet once, it is a little while.*

If we take the Words in the firſt Senſe, *Yet a little while*, they ſignifie, that God was then begining thoſe Changes in the World, which were to precede and make way for the coming of the Meſſias. This indeed was not till about Four Hundred Years after; but a great while before that time God began thoſe Changes in the World, which were to prepare the way for his coming; and conſidering the long time which was paſt from the firſt promiſe made to *Abraham*, Four Hundred Years in compariſon of that may ſeem but a little while. But I rather chooſe the latter Senſe of this Phraſe, *Yet once more*; becauſe the *Hebrew* will bear it, and becauſe it is ſo quoted in the New Teſtament; as if the Prophet had ſaid,

That God had before done a great thing in the World, and accompanied with great Miracles; *viz. The giving of the Law by Moſes*, which was attended with great Commotions, both in *Egypt*, by bringing the People of *Iſrael* out from thence with a mighty hand, and by deſtroying the Nations before them, whoſe Land God gave them for a Poſſeſſion; but now he would do one greater thing more, *the ſending of the Meſſias, and the planting of his Religion in the World*; in order whereunto there ſhould be much greater, and more univerſal Commotions and Changes in the World, and more and greater Miracles wrought; *Yet once more, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land, and I will ſhake all nations.* From which Words the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* argues the aboliſhing of the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, and the bringing in of another that ſhould be unalterable, *Heb.* 12. 27. *And this Word, yet once more,* (ſays the Apoſtle) *ſignifies the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.* And this I ſhall have occaſion to explain more

more fully in the following parts of this diſcourſe.

*Yet once more I will ſhake the heavens and the earth*, &c. For the underſtanding whereof, we are to conſider, That the *Hebrews* have no one Word whereby to expreſs *the World*, and therefore they do it by an enumeration of the principal Parts of it. So *Gen.* 1. when *Moſes* would expreſs the Creation of the World, he ſays, *In the begining God created the heaven and the earth.* And ſo St. *Peter*, when he would expreſs the Revolution of all things, after the univerſal Conflagration of the World, calls it, *a new heaven and a new earth*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 13. *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth*; that is, *a new World*, a quite other Frame and State of things, than that which we now ſee. And ſo the Prophet here in the Text, to expreſs the great Commotions and Changes that ſhould be in the World before the coming of the *Meſſias*, ſays, that God *will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land*; that is, he would cauſe great Revolutions in the World;

there ſhould be great Wars and Confuſions, and the Empires of the World ſhould paſs from one Hand to another. And thus we find this very Expreſſion interpreted, *ver.* 21, 22. of this Chapter, *I will ſhake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will deſtroy the ſtrength of the kingdoms of the nations.* And to ſhew that by *ſhaking the heavens and the earth*, is meant great Changes in the World, and as it were an univerſal Commotion of it, he adds in the Text, by way of farther Explication, *and I will ſhake all nations.*

And then it follows, *and the deſire of all nations ſhall come.* This we (as the ancient *Jews* alſo did) take to be a plain Character and Deſcription of the *Meſſias*, he is *the deſire of all nations*; he whom all Nations had reaſon to deſire, becauſe of thoſe great Bleſſings and Benefits which he was to bring to the World. Thus Interpreters generally underſtand theſe Words, and it is very true the Meſſias was ſo: but this does not ſeem to be the true importance of this Phraſe; for the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies *Expectation* as well as *Deſire*,

*Desire*, and so I should rather choose to render it, *the Expectation of all Nations shall come*; which signifies, that about the time of the coming of the *Messias*, not only the *Jews*, but other Nations, should be in a general Expectation of some *great Prince* then to appear; which was most eminently accomplished in our Blessed Saviour, as I shall shew by and by.

*And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts*, speaking of the Second Temple, which was then in building, which though it fell very much short of *Solomon*'s, in point of State and Magnificence; yet by being honoured with the Presence of the *Messias*, it should be much more Glorious than *Solomon*'s Temple. *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts*; not that God wanted the command of Gold and Silver, to have made this Second Temple equal to *Solomon*'s in outward Glory and Splendour; he could easily have made it so in that respect; and *Josephus* tells us, that not long before the time of our Saviour's coming, *Herod* had built and beautified it to that degree, that in some

ſome reſpects it excelled *Solomon*'s; and of this ſome underſtand the next words, *The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former*; namely, that this was accompliſhed in that Beauty and Magnificence which was added to it, when it was re-edified by *Herod* the Great: But however that be, this is certain, that it was much more Glorious in another reſpect, namely, that it entertained the *Meſſias*, *the great Expectation and Bleſſing of all Nations.*

*And in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* Some underſtand this, of that Univerſal Peace which was throughout the World, when our Saviour was born, in the Reign of *Auguſtus-Cæſar*. Others with great probability interpret this of the *Meſſias* himſelf, who is called here by the name of *Peace*; and ſo ſome of the ancient *Jews* underſtood it; *in this place will I give peace*, that is, *the Meſſias*. For the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies all kind of Happineſs, and ſo it includes all thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits, that Happineſs and Salvation which the *Meſſias* brought to the World. And this will appear very probable, if we conſider

conſider, how frequently in Scripture this Title is given to the *Meſſias*. *Iſai.* 9. 6. he is called *the Prince of peace*; and *Zach.* 9. 10. it is ſaid of him, *that he ſhould ſpeak peace to the nations*; and the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, parallels him with *Melchiſedech* in this Particular, *that he was King of Salem*, that is, *King of Peace*; and which is very little different from this, he is frequently in Scripture called *Salvation*, which ſignifies the **Happi**neſs of being reſcued and delivered from all kind of Evil; as *Peace* ſignifies all kind of Good. *Iſai.* 49. 6. *I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my Salvation to the end of the earth:* And *Luke* 2. 30. when *Simeon* had our Bleſſed Saviour in his Arms, when he was firſt brought into the Temple, he calls him *the Salvation of God*; *Mine Eyes* (ſaith he to God) *have ſeen thy ſalvation*; and *John* 4. 22. *Salvation is of the Jews*, that is, the *Meſſias* was to be of that Nation. But which is more expreſs, Chriſt is called *our peace*, *Eph.* 2. 14. nay, he is expreſly called *peace*, or *the peace*, *Micah* 5. 5. *and this man* (ſpeaking of the *Meſſias*) *ſhall be the peace*, that is, one of his Names or Titles ſhall be

*peace*;

*peace.* So that I make little doubt, but that in this Expreſſion in the Text, of *giving peace*, is meant, giving the *Meſſias*; and that this is render'd as the Reaſon, why the Glory of the Second Temple ſhould be greater than of the Firſt, becauſe in that place the *Meſſias* ſhould appear, and remarkably ſhew himſelf. God could have given this Second Temple, if he had thought fit, as much outward Glory and Beauty as that of *Solomon*'s building; for *ſilver and gold are his*, and all the Riches of the World are at his Command; but he choſe to put a far greater Honour upon it than that of Silver and Gold, and to make it much more Glorious in another reſpect, *the glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former*; *becauſe in this place I will give the Meſſias, the peace*, and Happineſs, and Salvation of Mankind, and incomparably the greateſt Bleſſing that ever was given to the World.

The Words being thus explained, it will now be more eaſie to ſhew, how the ſeveral parts of this Prediction do agree to *our bleſſed Saviour*, and to no other.

I. That

I. That there ſhould be great Changes and Commotions in the World before his coming; *I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land, and I will ſhake all nations*; and then he ſhould come.

II. That about the time of his coming, the World ſhould be in a general Expectation of him; *and the expectation of all nations ſhall come.*

III. That he ſhould come during the continuance of the Second Temple; for it was his coming that ſhould fill that Houſe with Glory, and in that place the *Meſſias*, who is called *Peace*, is promiſed to be given; *and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

IV. That this coming of the *Meſſias* ſhould be the laſt diſpenſation of God for the Salvation of Men, and conſequently ſhould be perpetual and unalterable; *yet once more, and I will ſhake the heavens and the earth*; *yet once more*, from whence the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* argues, that the Goſpel ſhould be a perpetual and unalterable diſpenſation.

Of

Of theſe I ſhall ſpeak ſeverally, and as briefly as I can.

I. Here is a Prediction of great Changes and Commotions in the World, before the coming of the Meſſias; *thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land, and I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come*; plainly ſignifying hereby, that before the coming of the *Meſſias* (who is here called *the deſire and expectation of all nations*) there ſhould be very great Commotions and Changes in the World, that the Empire of the World ſhould be overturned; for ſo I have told you, that this Expreſſion of *ſhaking the heavens and the earth* is explained, *ver.* 21. of this *Chapter*, *I will ſhake the heavens and the earth, and will overthrow the throne of kingdoms.* And this was fulfilled in a moſt remarkable manner, between the time of this Prophecy, and the coming of our Bleſſed Saviour, during which time, (though it was but four hundred Years) there happened great Commotions, and much more conſiderable Revolutions, in the great Kingdoms of the World, than had done

done in above two thouſand Years before, and in almoſt One thouſand ſeven hundred Years ſince; ſo that it is no wonder, that the Prediction of theſe things is by God himſelf expreſt in ſo very ſolemn a manner, as I obſerved before.

At the time of this Prophecy, the Empire of the World was newly tranſlated from the *Aſſyrians* to the *Medes* and *Perſians*; and not long after, the *Grecians* under *Alexander* the Great quite overthrew the *Perſian* Empire, and that by as ſudden a Change as was ever perhaps made in the World, poſſeſſing themſelves by ſo ſwift and ſpeedy a Conqueſt of a great part of the then known World, as if to paſs through it, and to conquer it, had been all one.

After the death of *Alexander*, the Empire of the *Grecians* was ſhared amongſt his great Captains, whom the *Romans* by degrees conquered, beſides a great many other Kingdoms which *Alexander* never ſaw, and ſome of them perhaps had never heard of. At laſt the Empire of the World, in all its greatneſs

neſs and Glory, was poſſeſt by *Auguſtus*, in whoſe time our Bleſſed Saviour was born.

So that here were mighty Commotions in the World, wonderful Changes of Kingdoms and Empires, before the coming of the *Meſſias*; far greater, and of much larger extent, than thoſe that were in *Egypt* and *Paleſtine*, at the bringing of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and the giving of the Law from Mount *Sinai*. And theſe did not only go before the coming of the *Meſſias*, but they made way for the more eaſie propagating of his Doctrine and Religion; for the *Grecians*, and eſpecially the *Romans*, ſetled their Conqueſts in ſuch a manner, as in a good meaſure to propagate their Language among the Nations which they conquered; and particularly the *Romans* did make the Ways for Travel and Commerce much more eaſie and commodious than ever they were before, by employing their Armies, when they had no other Work, to make High-ways, for the convenience of Paſſage from the Station of one Legion to another; the Benefit and effect whereof we in *England* enjoy

enjoy to this day; (a Pattern to all Princes and States that have neceſſary occaſion for Armies, how to employ them;) And this very thing proved afterwards a mighty Advantage for the more eaſie and ſpeedy ſpreading of Chriſtianity in the World.

II. Another part of this Prophecy is, That about the time of the coming of the *Meſſias*, the World ſhould be in a general expectation of him; *and the Expectation of all Nations ſhall come:* And I doubt not, but this Character of the *Meſſias* is taken out of that famous Prophecy concerning him, *Gen.* 49. 10. *The ſcepter ſhall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come*, (and by *Shiloh* the ancient *Jews* generally underſtood the *Meſſias*) *and to him ſhall the gathering of the people be*; or, as it is render'd by the *Septuagint*, and ſeveral other Tranſlations, *and he ſhall be the Expectation of the nations.* In alluſion to which ancient Prophecy concerning him, he is here in the Text called, *the Expectation of all nations*; and ſo by the Prophet *Malachi*, chap. 3. ver. 1. *and the Lord whom ye expect*, or look for, *ſhall ſuddenly come into his temple.* Now this part of the Pre-

diction in the Text, was most eminently fulfilled in our blessed Saviour. For about the time of his coming, the *Jews* were in a general expectation of him, as appears not only from that ancient and general Tradition of theirs, from the School of *Elias*, *that at the end of the second two thousand years of the World, the Messias should come*; (and our Blessed Saviour's coming did accordingly happen at that time;) but likewise from that particular Computation of the *Jewish* Doctors, not long before our Saviour's coming, who, upon a solemn debate of the matter, did determine that the *Messias* would come within fifty Years. And this is farther confirmed, from the great Jealousie which *Herod* had concerning *a King of the Jews*, that was expected to be born about that time; and from that remarkable Testimony in *Josephus*, who tells us, *That the* Jews *rebelled against the* Romans, *being encouraged thereto by a famous Prophecy in their Scriptures, that about that time a great Prince should be born among them, that should rule the World:* And *Josephus* flattered *Vespasian* so far, as to make him believe that he was the Man; and thereupon perswaded him to destroy

ſtroy the Line of *David*, out of which, the Tradition was, that the *Meſſias* ſhould ſpring; as if the Accompliſhment of a Divine Prediction could be hinder'd by any humane endeavour.

And this was not only the general expectation of the *Jews* about that time, but of a great part of the World; as appears from thoſe two famous Teſtimonies of two of the moſt eminent *Roman* Hiſtorians, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*. The words of *Suetonius* are theſe, *Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & conſtans opinio, eſſe in fatis, ut Judæâ profecti rerum potirentur: There was an ancient and general Opinion, famous throughout all the Eaſtern Parts, that the Fates had determined, that there ſhould come out of* Judea *thoſe that ſhould govern the World*; and he adds what I quoted before out of *Joſephus*, *Id Judæi ad ſe trahentes rebellarunt*; *that the* Jews *taking this to themſelves, did thereupon rebel.* Now it is very remarkable, that the very words of this Tradition, ſeem to be a verbal Tranſlation of that Prophecy in *Micah*, *That out of Judah ſhould come the Governour: Ut Judæâ profecti rerum potirentur.* The other

Teſtimony is out of *Tacitus*; and his Words are theſe, (*lib.* 21.) *Pluribus perſuaſio inerat antiquis Sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipſo tempore fore, ut valeſceret Oriens, profectique Judæâ rerum potirentur: A great many* (ſays he) *were poſſeſſed with a Perſuaſion that it was contained in the ancient Books of the Prieſts, that at that very time the Eaſt ſhould prevail, and that they who ſhould govern the World, were to come out of Judæâ.* By *the ancient Books of the Prieſts*, he in all probability means, *the ancient Prophecies of Scripture*; for the laſt Expreſſion is the ſame with that of *Suetonius* taken out of the Prophet *Micah*; and the other, *that the Eaſt ſhould prevail*, does plainly refer to that Title given to the *Meſſias* by the Prophet *Zachary*, chap. 6.12. where he is called, *The man whoſe name is* צמח, which ſignifies *Oriens* and *Germen*, both *the Eaſt* and *a Branch*; our Tranſlation hath it, *the man whoſe name is the Branch*; but it might as well be render'd, *the man whoſe name is the Eaſt*. Thus you ſee this Character of our Saviour in this Prophecy moſt literally fulfilled, that he was *the Expectation of all Nations*. I proceed to the

III. Circum-

III. Circumſtance of this Prediction, That he who is here foretold, ſhould come during the continuance of this ſecond Temple; becauſe it was his Preſence, that ſhould *fill that houſe with glory*; and it was *in that place* that the *Meſſias*, who is called *the Peace*, is promiſed *to be given*; *and in this place will I give Peace, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* And this is likewiſe moſt expreſly foretold by the Prophet *Malachi*, chap. 3. 1. *Behold, I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye look for, ſhall ſuddenly come into his temple; even the Meſſenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* And accordingly *Jeſus* our Bleſſed Saviour came during the ſecond Temple; he was preſented there by his Parents, and owned by *Simeon* for the *Meſſias*; he diſputed there, and taught frequently there, and by his Preſence *filled that houſe with glory.* For that the Son of God taught publickly there, was a greater Honour to it, than all the Silver and Gold of *Solomon*'s Temple.

And not long after his death accord-

ing to his expreſs Prediction) this ſecond Temple was deſtroyed to the ground; *ſo that not one ſtone of it was left upon another.* And when ſome hundred of Years after, it was attempted to be rebuilt three ſeveral times, the laſt whereof was by *Julian* the Apoſtate, in oppoſition to Chriſtianity, and to our Saviour's Prediction; Fire came out of the Foundation, and deſtroyed the Workmen; ſo that they deſiſted in great terrour, and durſt never attempt it afterwards. And this not only the Chriſtian Writers of that Age in great numbers do teſtifie, but *Ammianus Marcellinus* (a Heathen Hiſtorian who lived in that time) does alſo give us a very particular Account of this memorable matter. So that if by *the Expectation of the Nations* be here meant *the Meſſias*, (as I have plainly ſhewn) then he is long ſince come, and was no other than *Jeſus* our Bleſſed Saviour, who, according to this Prophecy, was *to fill the ſecond temple with glory*; which hath now been demoliſh'd above One thouſand ſix hundred Years ago, and the rebuilding whereof hath been ſo often and ſo remarkably hinder'd from Heaven. The Conſideration of all which

which were ſufficient to convince the *Jews* of their vain Expectation of a *Meſſias* yet to come; were they not ſo obſtinately rooted and fixed in their infidelity. There remains now the

IV. And *Laſt* Circumſtance of this Prophecy, *viz.* That the coming of the *Meſſias* was to be the laſt Diſpenſation of God, for the Salvation of Men; and conſequently was to be perpetual and unchangeable: *Yet once more, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land: And I will ſhake all nations, and the Expectation of all nations ſhall come. Yet once more*; from which Words, the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* argues the Perpetuity of the Goſpel, and that it was the Diſpenſation which ſhould never be changed, *Heb.* 12. 27. *And this word, Yet once more, ſignifies, the removing of thoſe things which are ſhaken, as of things that are made, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.* And then it follows, *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*, &c. It was uſual with the *Jews* to deſcribe the times of the Goſpel, by *the Kingdom of the Meſſias*; and accordingly the Apoſtle here calls

the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, *a kingdom which cannot be moved*: In oppoſition to the *Law*, which was an imperfect and alterable Diſpenſation. For this is plainly the ſcope of the Apoſtle's reaſoning; namely, to convince the *Jews*, that they were now under a more gracious and perfect Diſpenſation than that of the *Law*, *ver.* 18. *Ye are not come unto the mount, that might be touched, and that burned with fire*; meaning Mount *Sinai*, which was a ſenſible literal Mountain, *a mountain that might be touched*, in oppoſition to the myſtical and ſpiritual Mount *Sion*; by which the diſpenſation of the *Goſpel* is deſcribed: Which by the way prevents the Objection of its being called *the Mountain that might be touch'd*, when it was forbidden to be touch'd upon pain of Death; *Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched*; that is, I am not now ſpeaking of a literal and ſenſible Mountain, ſuch as was Mount *Sinai*, from whence the *Law* was given; but of that Spiritual and Heavenly Diſpenſation of the *Goſpel*, which was typified by Mount *Sion* and by *Jeruſalem*; *but ye are come to mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem*,

*ſalem, and to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant.* And then he cautions them to take heed how they reject him that came from Heaven, to make this laſt Revelation of God to the World; which becauſe of the clearneſs and perfection of it, ſhould never need to receive any change, *ver.* 25. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh; for if they eſcaped not, who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, (viz. Moſes,* who delivered the Law from Mount *Sinai*) *much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven: whoſe voice then ſhook the earth,* (alluding to the Earthquake at the giving of the Law) *but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more, I ſhake not the Earth only; but alſo heaven;* that is, *the whole World,* in order to the coming of the *Meſſias,* and the planting of the Goſpel in the World; and then he argues from the words *once more,* that the former Diſpenſation ſhould be removed, to make way for that which ſhould perpetually remain.

And indeed there is no need of any farther Revelation after this; nor of any change of that Religion which was

was brought from Heaven by the Son of God; becauſe of the perfection of it, and its fitneſs to reform the World, and to recover Mankind out of their lapſed and degenerate Condition, and to bring them to Happineſs; both by the Purity of its Doctrine, and the Power of its Arguments to work upon the Minds of Men, by the clear diſcovery of the mighty Rewards and Puniſhments of another World.

And now the proper Inference from all this Diſcourſe, is the very ſame with that which the Apoſtle makes, from the Conſideration of the Perfection and Excellency of this Revelation, which God hath made to the World by his Son. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: for how ſhall we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven?* And at the 28th Verſe of that Chapter, *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*; that is, Let us live as becomes thoſe to whom God hath made ſo clear and perfect a Revelation of his Will. We have all the Advantages of the Divine Reve-

Revelation which the World ever had, and the laſt and moſt perfect that the World ever ſhall have: We have not only *Moſes and the Prophets*, but that Doctrine which *the Son of God* came down from Heaven on purpoſe to declare to the World. God hath vouchſafed to us that clear and compleat Revelation of his Will, which he denied to *many Prophets and righteous men*; *who deſired to ſee the things which we ſee, but could not ſee them*; *and to hear the things which we hear, but could not hear them.* There were good Men in the World under thoſe imperfect Revelations which God made to them; but we have far greater Advantages, and more powerful Arguments to be Good, than ever they had. And as we ought thankfully to acknowledge theſe bleſſed Advantages; ſo ought we likewiſe, with the greateſt care and diligence, to improve them.

And now how does the ſerious Conſideration of this condemn all impenitent Sinners under the Goſpel, who will not be reclaimed from their Sins, and perſwaded to goodneſs, by all that God can do; by the moſt plain Declaration

ration of his Will to the World, by the most perfect Precepts and Directions for a good Life, by the most encouraging Promises to Obedience, and by the most severe Threatnings of an Eternal and Unutterable Ruin, in case of disobedience; *by the wrath of God, revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, by the Terrours of the great day, and the Vengeance of Eternal Fire; by the wonderful and amazing Condescension of the Son of God, appearing in our Nature; by his merciful undertaking for the Redemption of lost and sinful Man; by his cruel Sufferings for our Sins, and by the kindest Offers of Pardon and Reconciliation in his Blood, and by the glorious hopes of Eternal Life!

What could God have done more for us, than he hath done? What greater concernment could he shew for our Salvation, than *to send his own son, his only son, to seek and save us?* And what greater demonstration could he give of his Love to us, than *to give the Son of his Love to die for us?* This is the last Effort that the Divine Mercy and Goodness will make upon Mankind.

kind. So the Apoſtle tells us in the begining of this Epiſtle, chap. 1. 1. that *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in times paſt unto the Fathers, by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son:* And if we will not hear him, he will ſpeak no more; after this it is not to be expected that he ſhould make any farther Attempts for our recovery, he can ſend no greater and dearer Perſon to us, than *his own Son.* If we deſpiſe him; whom will we Reverence? If we reject him, and the great Salvation which he brings and offers to us; we have all the reaſon in the World to believe that our caſe is deſperate, and that we ſhall *die in our Sins. This* was *the Condemnation* of the *Jews*, that *they did not receive and believe on him whom God had ſent.* And if we who profeſs to believe on him, and to receive his Doctrine, be found diſobedient to it in our Lives, we have reaſon to fear, that our Condemnation ſhall be far heavier than theirs: For ſince the appearance of *the Son of God* for the Salvation of men, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, eſpecially againſt thoſe *who detain the truth*

of

*of God in unrighteouſneſs*; that is, againſt thoſe who entertain the Light of God's Truth in their Minds, but do not ſuffer it to have its proper Effect and Influence upon their Hearts and Lives; and make that a Priſoner, which would make them free. So our Lord tells us, that *the truth ſhall make us free*; but if *after we have received the knowledge of the truth*, we are ſtill *the Servants of ſin*; our Condemnation is much worſe, than if *the Son of God* had never come: For the Chriſtian Religion hath done nothing; if it do not take men off from their Sins, and teach them to live well.

Eſpecially at *this time*, when we are celebrating *the coming of the ſon of God, to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, we ſhould take great heed, that we be not found guilty of any Impiety and Wickedneſs; becauſe this is directly contrary to the main Deſign of *the grace of God which brings Salvation, and hath appeared to all men*, (and the appearance whereof we do at *this time* commemorate) for That *teacheth men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly and righteouſly and godlily in this preſent world*: And

And we cannot gratifie the Devil more, than by ſhewing our ſelves more diligent than ordinary to uphold his Works, at *this very time*, when *the Son of God was manifeſted* on purpoſe *to diſſolve them*: We cannot poſſibly chooſe a worſe, a more improper Seaſon to ſin in, than when we are celebrating the Birth of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, who came *to ſave us from our ſins*. This is, as if a ſick Man, for joy that a famous Phyſician is come to his Houſe, ſhould run into all manner of Exceſs, and ſo do all he can to enflame his diſeaſe, and make his caſe deſperate. Not but that our inward Joy may lawfully be accompanied with all outward innocent Expreſſions of it: but we cannot be truly thankful, if we allow our ſelves at *this time* in any thing contrary to the Purity and Sobriety of the Goſpel. It is matter of juſt and ſad complaint, being of great ſcandal to our Saviour, and his holy Religion, that ſuch irregular and extravagant things are at *this time* commonly done by many, who call themſelves Chriſtians; and done under a pretence of doing Honour to the Memory of Chriſt's Birth; as if, becauſe *the Son of God* was at this time made *Man*, it were

were fit for *Men* to make themſelves *Beaſts.*

If we would honour him indeed, we muſt take care that our Joy do not degenerate into Sin and Senſuality, and that we do not expreſs it by Lewdneſs and Luxury, by Intemperance and Exceſs, by prodigal Gameing, and profuſe waſting of our Eſtates, *as the manner of ſome is*; as if we intended literally to requite our Saviour, *who being rich, for our ſakes became poor.* This is a way of *parting with houſes and land, and becoming poor for his ſake*, for which he will never thank, nor reward us. This is not to commemorate the Coming of our Saviour; but to contradict it, and openly to declare that we will uphold *the Works of the Devil*, in deſpight of *the Son of God, who came to deſtroy them.* It is for all the World like that lewd and ſenſeleſs piece of Loyalty, too much in faſhion ſome Years ago, of being Drunk for the King. Good God! that ever it ſhould paſs for a piece of Religion among Chriſtians, to run into all manner of exceſs for twelve days together, in honour of our Saviour! A greater Aggravation

gravation of Sin cannot eaſily be imagined, than to abuſe the Memory of the greateſt Bleſſing that ever was, *Chriſt coming into the world to take away ſin*, into an opportunity of committing it; this is to repreſent the Son of God as a Patron of Sin and Licentiouſneſs, and to treat him more contumeliouſly than the *Jews* did, who bowed the Knee to him and mocked him, and called him King and ſpat upon him; and, under a pretence of rejoycing for his Birth, *to crucifie to our ſelves afreſh the Lord of life and glory; and to put him to an open ſhame.*

I will conclude all with the Apoſtle's Exhortation, *Rom.* 13. 12, 13, 14. *Let us caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us put on the Armour of Light, let us walk decently as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make not proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.*

Now to our moſt gracious and merciful God, the great Friend and Lover of Souls, who regarded us in our low

and loſt Condition, and caſt an Eye of Pity upon us, when *we were in our Blood, and no other Eye pityed us*, and when we had loſt and ruined our ſelves, was pleaſed in tender compaſſion to Mankind, *to ſend his only begotten Son into the World, to ſeek and ſave us*, and by the Purity of his Doctrine, and the Pattern of his Life, and the Sacrifice of his Death, to purchaſe Eternal Life for us, and to direct and lead us in the way to it: And to him alſo, the Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind, who came down from Heaven, that he might carry us thither, and took Humane Nature upon him, that we thereby might be *made Partakers of a Divine Nature*; and *humbled himſelf to Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, that he might exalt us to Glory and Honour, and whilſt we were bitter Enemies to him, gave ſuch a Demonſtration of his Love to us, as never any Man did to his beſt Friend: *Unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb that was ſlain, to God, even our Father, and to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the firſt begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of*

*of the Earth, to him who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father, to him be glory and honour, dominion and power, now and for ever.* Amen.

# A SERMON

Preached at

## St. *Peter's Cornhil,*

ON THE

Feaſt of the Annunciation, 1691.

1 Tim. II. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.*

THESE Words contain in them theſe four Propoſitions; three of them expreſs, and the fourth of them ſufficiently implyed in the Text.

I. *That there is one God.*

II. *That there is One Mediator between God and men; Christ Jesus.*

III. *That he gave himself a ransom for all.*

IV. *That the Mediation or Intercession of Jesus Christ, is founded in the Redemption of Mankind:* For this seems to be the Reason why it is added, that *he gave himself a ransom for all*, to signifie to us, that because *he gave himself a ransom for all*, therefore he interceeds for all. In vertue of that Sacrifice which he offered to God for the Salvation of Men, he offers up our Prayers to God; and therefore it is acceptable to him, *that we should pray for all men.* This seems to be the true connexion of the Apostle's Discourse, and the force of his Reasoning, about our putting up *publick prayers for all men.*

I have in a former Discourse handled the *first* of these. I proceed now to the

*See a Sermon concerning* the Unity of the Divine Nature, *printed in the year*, 1693.

II. *That*

II. *That there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus. One Mediator*, that is, *But one*; for the expreſſion is the very ſame concerning *one God*, and *one Mediator*; and therefore if the Apoſtle, when he ſays, *there is one God*, certainly means that there is *but one God*; it is equally certain, that when he ſays *there is one Mediator between God and men*, he means, there is *but one Mediator*, viz. *Chriſt Jeſus*. He is the only Mediator between God and Men.

In the handling of this Argument, I ſhall proceed in this Method.

1. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, That God hath appointed but one Mediator, or Advocate, or Interceſſor in Heaven for us; in whoſe Name, and by whoſe Mediation and Interceſſion, we are to offer up our Prayers and Services to God.

2. That this is moſt agreeable to one main End and Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, and of our Saviour's coming into the World.

3. That it is likewiſe evident from the Nature and Reaſon of the thing it ſelf, That there is but one Mediator and Interceſſor in Heaven for us, to offer up our Prayers to God; and that there can be no more. And then,

4. And *Laſtly*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, how contrary to the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion, concerning one Mediator and Interceſſor in Heaven for us, the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* in this matter is, in their Invocation of Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints, and making uſe of their Mediation and Interceſſion with God for Sinners; as likewiſe how contrary it is to the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Chriſtian Church? And then I ſhall anſwer their ſeveral Pretences for this Doctrine and Practice; and ſhew that this Practice is not only needleſs, but uſeleſs and unprofitable; and not only ſo, but very dangerous and impious.

1. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, That God hath appointed but one Mediator, or Advocate, or Interceſſor in Heaven for

for us, in whoſe Name, and by whoſe Interceſſion we are to offer up all our Prayers and Services to God.

Beſides that it is expreſly ſaid here in the Text, *there is but one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, and that the Scripture no were mentions any other: I ſay, beſides this, we are conſtantly directed to offer up our Prayers and Thankſgivings, and to perform all Acts of Worſhip in his Name, and no other; and with a Promiſe, that the Prayers and Services, which we offer up in his Name, will be graciouſly anſwered and accepted: *John* 14. 13, 14. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask in my name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ſhall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* And Ch. 16. 23, 24. *And in that day ye ſhall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.* *In that day*; that is, when I have left the World, and am gone to my Father, as he explains it at the 28th ver. *In that day ye ſhall ask me nothing*;

*thing*; but *whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* That is, You ſhall not need to addreſs your Prayers to me, but to my Father in my Name. And, v. 26,27. *At that day ye ſhall ask in my name*; that is, from the time that I am aſcended into Heaven, ye ſhall put up all your Prayers and Requeſts to God, in my Name; *and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himſelf loveth you*; that is, I need not tell you (though I ſhall certainly do it) that I will interceed with the Father for you; for he of himſelf is kindly diſpoſed and affected towards you, for my ſake; *The Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me.*

St. *Paul* likewiſe commands Chriſtians to perform all Acts of Religious Worſhip in the Name of Chriſt; *Col.* 3. 16, 17. *Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, and whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* And this Precept of addreſſing all our Prayers and Thankſgivings to God, by Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Mediator between God and us, is the more remarkable, becauſe it is given in oppoſition

poſition to the worſhipping of God by any other Mediators and Interceſſors in Heaven for us; and to that Superſtition which had begun ſo early to prevail among ſome Chriſtians at *Coloſſe* and *Laodicea*, of worſhipping God by the Mediation and Interceſſion of Angels, againſt which he had cautioned in the former Chapter, Ver. 18, 19. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels, not holding the head.* Intimating, that for Chriſtians to addreſs themſelves to God, by any other Mediator, but Jeſus Chriſt only, was a defection from Chriſt *the Head*, and *High Prieſt of our Profeſſion.* And that this is the Apoſtle's meaning, *Theodoret* aſſures us, in his Comment upon this Place, where he tells us, That ſome who maintained an obſervance of the Law, together with the Goſpel, aſſerted alſo, *That Angels were to be worſhipped*; ſaying, *That the Law was given by them.* And this Cuſtom, he tells us, remained a long time in *Phrygia* and *Piſidia*, and that upon this account it was, that the Synod of *Laodicea* in *Phrygia* (about the middle of the 4th Century) forbad Chriſtians by a Law,

to

to pray to Angels. And yet more expreſly in his Comment upon thoſe Words, Chap. 3. Ver. 17. *Whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* For *becauſe*, (ſays he) *they* (meaning thoſe of whom St. *Paul* warns the *Coloſſians* to beware) *becauſe they did command men to worſhip Angels, he enjoyns the contrary; that they ſhould adorn both their words and actions with the memory (or mention) of the name of Chriſt their Lord: And ſend ye up* (ſaith he) *thanksgiving to God and the Father by him, and not by the Angels.* And then he makes mention of the Canon of the Synod of *Laodicea*, *which*, (ſays he) *in purſuance of this rule, and being deſirous to cure that old diſeaſe, made it a Law, that none ſhould pray unto Angels, nor forſake our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* It ſeems then that ſome Reliques of that impious Cuſtom, of praying to Angels, which *Theodoret* here calls, *That old Diſeaſe*, had continued from St. *Paul*'s time, to the Council of *Laodicea*, which was the occaſion of that ſevere *Canon* then made about that matter; the very Words whereof I will ſet down, becauſe they are remarkable;

markable; *viz. That Chriſtians ought not to forſake the Church of God, and go away from it, and to invocate Angels, and to make Conventicles, all which are forbidden. If any therefore be found giving himſelf to this ſecret Idolatry, let him be Anathema; becauſe he hath forſaken our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, and is gone over to Idolatry.* What ſhall be ſaid to them, who do not only ſecretly, and in their Private Devotions, but in the Publick Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, and in the moſt Publick Offices of their Church, invocate Angels, and pray to them? So that it was praying to Angels (or making uſe of them as Mediators and Interceſſors with God for us) which St. *Paul* here reproves ſo ſeverely in the *Coloſſians*, as a Defection from Chriſt and the Chriſtian Religion.

And indeed, conſidering how frequently the Scripture ſpeaks of Chriſt, as *our only way to God, and by whom alone we have acceſs to the throne of grace*, we cannot doubt, but that God hath conſtituted him our only Mediator and Interceſſor, by whom we are to addreſs all our Requeſts to God. *John* 14. 6.

*Jeſus*

*Jeſus* there ſaith unto *Thomas*, *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the way, the truth, and the life*; that is, the true and living way to the Father (which the Apoſtle calls *a new and living way*, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. *Having therefore boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us.*) *No man cometh to the father but by me*; that is, we can have no acceſs to God by Prayer, or by any other acts of Religious Worſhip, but by him. So St. *Paul* tells us, *Eph.* 2. 18. *For through him* (ſpeaking of Chriſt) *we both have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father. We both*, that is, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Under the Law the *Jews* had acceſs to God by their High Prieſt, who interceeded with God, and offered up Prayers in behalf of the People. The *Gentiles*, they addreſſed themſelves to God by innumerable Mediators, by Angels, and the Souls of their departed Heroes, which were the *Pagan* Saints. Inſtead of all theſe, God hath appointed one Mediator and Interceſſor in Heaven for us, *Jeſus the Son of God*, and *by him all mankind*, both

both *Jews* and *Gentiles, have acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father.*

And we have no need of any other, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* reaſons, Chap. 7. 24, 25. *But this perſon,* (ſpeaking of Chriſt) *becauſe he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable Prieſthood,* ἀπαράβατον, *a Prieſthood which doth not paſs from one to another,* as the Prieſthood under the Law did, when upon the death of one High Prieſt, another ſucceeded in his place; but our High Prieſt under the Goſpel, *ſince he abides for ever, is able to ſave to the utmoſt all thoſe that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for us.* So that Jeſus Chriſt is an alſufficient Mediator, and able to carry on and accompliſh the Work of our Salvation from firſt to laſt: And as we do not find, that God hath appointed any other; ſo we are ſure, that there needs no other, *ſince he is able to ſave to the utmoſt all thoſe that come to God by him, and that he lives for ever to make interceſſion for us.*

I proceed now, in the *Second* place, to ſhew, That this Doctrine or Principle of

of *one Mediator between God and men*, is moſt agreeable to one main end and deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, and of our Saviour's coming into the World, which was *to deſtroy Idolatry out of the world*; which St. *John* calls *the works of the Devil*, 1 *John* 3. 8. *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy*, ἵνα λύσῃ, *that he might diſſolve or demoliſh the works of the Devil*; by which St. *John* does more eſpecially mean *the idolatrous worſhip of the heathen*, which conſiſted in the multitude of their Gods, and the bloody and barbarous Rites and Sacrifices, whereby they worſhipped them; and likewiſe in the Multitude of their Mediators between the Gods and Men, who were alſo eſteemed by them an inferiour ſort of Deities. Both theſe kinds of Idolatry had ſtrangely prevailed, and over-run the World, before the appearance of our Lord and Saviour, who came on purpoſe to deliver Mankind from the horrible Superſtition and Slavery of the Worſhip of falſe Gods, to pull down this Kingdom of the Devil, and to demoliſh that Fabrick which he had been ſo long a rearing, and to beat him out of thoſe ſtrong holds,

holds, which he thought had been impregnable.

God indeed gave ſome check to theſe, many Ages before, and not long after their firſt appearance, by *the Jewiſh Religion*, which was on purpoſe introduced, and confirmed, and eſtabliſhed by ſo many and ſuch mighty Miracles, to preſerve and keep alive in the World the primitive Tradition and Belief of *the One true God*; and likewiſe to be (as it were) ſome Shadow and rude Draught of that more perfect Diſpenſation of *the Chriſtian Religion*, which by *one Sacrifice once offered*, and by *one Mediator between God and men*, was to put an end to the infinite Superſtitions of the Heathen Worſhip, and all the bloody and barbarous Rites of it, and likewiſe to the Idolatry they were guilty of, in the Worſhip of their inferior Deities, whom they look'd upon as a middle ſort of Powers between the Gods and Men, and therefore addreſs'd themſelves to them, as Mediators between the Superior and Heavenly Gods, and Men here on Earth. This was plainly one of the great deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion;

and therefore it concerns Chriſtians to underſtand it, and to be very careful, that they do not ſuffer themſelves to be deluded by any ſpecious Pretences whatſoever, to bring theſe things back again into the Chriſtian Religion, for the ruin and extirpation whereof, it was purpoſely deſigned and intended.

And this ſeems plainly to be the meaning of that Caution, wherewith St. *John* concludes his *Catholick* or *General Epiſtle*, namely, That Chriſtians ſhould be very careful, that they were not carryed back again into the Heathen Idolatry, by the confident Pretences of the *Gnoſtick* Hereticks to higher Degrees of Knowledge and Illumination, than other Chriſtians had; that is, by their pretending to be *the Infallible Church, and the only true and genuine Chriſtians*. For it is againſt this *Sect*, that this *Epiſtle* is plainly deſigned, which St. *John* thus concludes, Chap. 5. from Ver. 18. to the end; *We know that whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not*; (meaning that he doth not commit *the Sin unto death*, which he had ſpoken of juſt before, *viz.* Apoſta-

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cy from Chriſtianity to the Heathen Idolatry, or that which was very like it) *whoſoever is born of God doth not commit* this *ſin, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not*; that is, he preſerveth himſelf from the Contagion of Idolatry, into which the Devil was ſo buſie to ſeduce Mankind. *And we know that we are of God*; that is, do belong to the true God, and are Worſhippers of him: *And the whole world lyeth in Wickedneſs,* ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται, *is in the power*, or *under the dominion of that wicked One*; that is, the greateſt part of Mankind was ſunk into Idolatry, and the Worſhip of the Devil. *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true. We know*, that is, we Chriſtians are better taught by the Chriſtian Religion, to acknowledge and worſhip the only true God: *And we are in him that is true, in* or *by his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, we worſhip the only true God, by his Son Jeſus Chriſt. And then he concludes, *Little Children, keep your ſelves from Idols*; Intimating hereby, that the worſhipping of any other, beſides this

only true God, and by any other Mediator than Jeſus Chriſt, is *Idolatry*.

There were indeed two very ancient and common Notions, both amongſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, of the Original whereof it is hard to give any certain account; only this is certain, that they did prevail very early, and did very generally poſſeſs Mankind; And they were theſe; *Firſt*, That God was not to be appeaſed toward Sinners, meerly upon their Repentance, without the Death and Suffering of ſome other in their ſtead; and that God would accept of this vicarious Puniſhment and Suffering, inſtead of the Death of the Sinner himſelf. And this ſeems to have given the Original to the Sacrifices of Living Creatures, to appeaſe the Wrath of God towards Sinners, which in proceſs of time, as the Worſhip of falſe Gods prevailed in the World, did proceed to that Degree of Superſtition and barbarous Inhumanity, that by the inſtigation of the Devil, men offered up the Blood of their Children, and ſacrificed their Sons and Daughters to their Idols and falſe Gods. *Secondly*, Another common Notion, which had likewiſe

likewiſe poſſeſt Mankind, was, That God was not to be immediately approached by ſinful Men; but that their Prayers were to be offered up to the Deity, by certain Mediators and Interceſſors, that were to procure for them the Favour of the Gods, and the gracious Anſwer and Acceptance of their Prayers. And this was the Original of that other ſort of Heathen Idolatry, which conſiſted in the Worſhip of their Demons and Heroes, that is of Angels and Souls departed, *viz.* of ſuch eminent Perſons, as had been great Benefactors to Mankind, and for their worthy Deeds upon Earth were Canonized and tranſlated into the number of their Inferior Gods. By theſe, as the chief Courtiers and Favourites of Heaven, they addreſs'd their Prayers and Supplications to the Superiour Gods.

Now with theſe Notions which had generally poſſeſs'd Mankind (how imperfect ſoever) God was pleaſed to comply ſo far, as in the Frame of the Jewiſh Religion (which was deſigned for a Type of the more perfect Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Religion, and a Prepara-

tion for it) I ſay, God was pleaſed to comply ſo far with theſe Notions, as to appoint Sacrifices to be ſlain and offered up for the Sinner; and likewiſe *an High Prieſt, that once a year ſhould enter into the Holy of Holies, with the Blood of Sacrifices* that were offered up for the People, to make Expiation for them, and in vertue of that Blood, *ſhould intercede for the People*, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* does declare at large. And when *God ſent his Son, in the fulneſs of time*, he was pleaſed likewiſe, in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, (that perfect Inſtitution which was never to be altered) to have ſo much regard to theſe common Notions, and Apprehenſions of Mankind, as to provide for the ſupply of thoſe two great Wants, which they ſeem'd always to have laboured under, and concerning which they were at ſo great a loſs, *viz.* an effectual expiatory Sacrifice for Sins upon Earth, and a powerful Mediator and Interceſſor with God in Heaven: And both theſe by the ſame Perſon, *Jeſus Chriſt, who appeared in the end of the World, to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*; and in the Merit and Vertue of that Sacrifice, *appearing*

*in*

*in Heaven in the Preſence of God for us*, is become a perpetual Advocate, and a moſt powerful Interceſſor with God in Heaven for us. So that inſtead of the endleſs Sacrifices of the Jewiſh Religion, which were ineffectual to the real Expiation of Sin, and only Types and Shadows of the true expiatory Sacrifice; and inſtead of the bloody and inhumane Sacrifices of the Heathen Idolatry; the Son of God hath *by one Sacrifice for Sin once offered, perfected for ever them that are ſanctified, and obtained eternal Redemption for us.* And inſtead of the Mediation of Angels, and the Souls of their departed Heroes, which the Heathen made uſe of to offer up their Prayers to the Gods; We have *one Mediator between God and men*, appointed by God himſelf, *Jeſus the Son of God*, who in our Nature is aſcended into Heaven, *to appear in the preſence of God for us.* And who ſo fit to be our Patron and Advocate, as he who was our Sacrifice and Propitiation?

Thus the Method of our Redemption, as it was by the Wiſdom of God admirably ſuited to the common Appre-

henſions of Mankind, concerning the neceſſity of a Sacrifice to make Expiation of Sin, and of a Mediator to intercede with God for Sinners; ſo was it likewiſe excellently fitted, not only to put an end to the Jewiſh Sacrifices, but likewiſe to aboliſh the barbarous Sacrifices and Rites of the Heathen Idolatry, and to caſhier that infinite number of Mediators and Interceſſors, by whom they addreſs'd their Prayers to the Deity; and inſtead of all this, to introduce a more reaſonable and ſpiritual Worſhip, more agreeable to the Nature and Perfections of God, and the Reaſon of Mankind; which was one of the main and principal Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion: And therefore to bring in any other Mediators, to intercede in Heaven for us (whether Angels or Saints) and by them to offer up our Prayers to God, is directly contrary to the Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion.

III. It is likewiſe evident *from the Nature and Reaſon of the thing it ſelf*, that *there is but one Mediator* and Interceſſor in Heaven, who offers up our Prayers to God, and that there can be no more.

more. Becauſe under the Goſpel there being *but one High Prieſt*, and *but one Sacrifice once offered for ſin*, and Interceſſion for Sinners being founded in the Merit and Vertue of the Sacrifice, by which Expiation for Sin is made, there can be no other *Mediator of Interceſſion*, but he who hath made Expiation of Sin, by a Sacrifice offered to God for that purpoſe; and this *Jeſus Chriſt* only hath done. He is both *our High Prieſt*, and *our Sacrifice*; and therefore he only, in the Merit and Vertue of that Sacrifice, which he offered upon Earth, can *intercede* in Heaven for us, and offer up our Prayers to God. Others may pray to God for us; as our Brethren upon Earth do, and perhaps the Angels and Saints in Heaven; but none of theſe can offer up our Prayers to God, and procure the acceptance of them; for that can only be done in Vertue of a Sacrifice firſt offered, and by him that offered it; this being the peculiar Office and Qualification of a *Mediator* or *Interceſſor*, properly ſo called.

It is the plain Deſign of the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, to prove that

that Chriſt is our *only Mediator* in Heaven, in Vertue of that Sacrifice for Sin, which he offered upon Earth; and that he alone *appears in the preſence of God for us*, to preſent our Requeſts to him, and obtain a gracious Anſwer of them; and he ſhews at large, how this was particularly typified by the *Jewiſh High Prieſt*, who upon the great day of Expiation, after the Sacrifice was ſlain without, *enter'd alone into the Holy of Holies, with the Blood of the Sacrifices*, in Vertue whereof he *made Interceſſion for the People.* Anſwerable to this, *Jeſus the High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, offered himſelf a Sacrifice* for the Sins of Men, and in vertue of that Sacrifice *is enter'd into the High Place not made with Hands*, that is, *into Heaven it ſelf, there to appear in the Preſence of God for us, where he lives for ever to make interceſſion for us*, in Vertue of that *Eternal Redemption, which he hath obtained for us*, by the Price of his Blood, as the Apoſtle declares in ſeveral Chapters of that Epiſtle. So that this Interceſſion being founded in the Merit of a Sacrifice, which he alone offered, he is of neceſſity

neceſſity, *the only Mediator between God and Men.*

And for this Reaſon it is, that the Mediation and Interceſſion of Chriſt, is ſo frequently in Scripture mentioned together with the Expiation which he made for the Sins of Men, or, (which is the ſame,) with the Price which he paid for the Redemption of Mankind; becauſe the one is founded in the other, and depends upon it. So we find, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.* And here likewiſe in the Text, *There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all*; therefore *the only Mediator between God and men*; becauſe *he only gave himſelf a Ranſom for all men.* The Efficacy and Prevalency of his Mediation, being founded in the Merit and Vertue of the Ranſom of his Blood.

And the force of theſe Texts, and this reaſoning from them, is not to be avoided and turned off, by

by diſtinguiſhing between *a Mediator of Redemption* and *of Interceſſion*, and by ſaying, that it is true, that Chriſt is *the only Mediator of Redemption*, but there may be many *Mediators of Interceſſion*: For if the Force of his being Advocate or Interceſſor be founded in the Vertue of his Ranſom and Propitiation (as I have plainly ſhewn, to the Conviction of any that are not ſtrongly prejudiced, and that will read and conſider what the Scripture ſays in this matter without Prepoſſeſſion,) then it is plain, that none can be a proper *Mediator of Interceſſion*, but he that paid the Price of our Redemption: So that *the Mediator of our Redemption*, and *our Mediator of Interceſſion*, muſt of neceſſity be one and the ſame Perſon; and none can appear in the Quality of *our Advocate with the Father*, but he only who is *the Propitiation for the ſins of the whole World.*

I ſhould now have proceeded to the

*Fourth* thing I propoſed in the handling of this Argument, namely, To ſhew how contrary to this Doctrine of the Chriſtian

Chriſtian Religion, concerning *one only Mediator and Interceſſor in Heaven for us*, the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* is in this matter; namely, in their Invocation of Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints, and flying to their Help, and making uſe of their Mediation and Interceſſion with God for Sinners: As likewiſe, how contrary all this is to the Doctrine and Practice of the Chriſtian Church, for ſeveral of the firſt Ages of it. And then I ſhould have anſwered their chief Pretences and Excuſes for theſe things, and ſhew'd that this Practice of theirs is not only needleſs, (being no where commanded by God) but uſeleſs alſo, and unprofitable; and not only ſo, but very dangerous and impious, being contrary to the Chriſtian Religion, and highly derogating from the Vertue and Merit of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and from the Honour of *the only Mediator between God and Men.* But of this another time.

# A SERMON ON 1 TIM. II. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all.*

IN these Words are *four* Propositions; *three* expreſt, and the *fourth* implied.

I. *That there is one God.*

II. *That there is one Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus.*

III. *That*

III. *That he gave himſelf a Ranſom for all.*

IV. *That the Mediation or Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, is founded in his Redemption of Mankind: That becauſe he gave himſelf a Ranſom for all men,* therefore he, and he only, is qualified to intercede for all Men, in Vertue of that Sacrifice which he offer'd for the Salvation of all Mankind.

The *Second* of theſe I ſpake to the laſt time, and endeavour'd to ſhew,

1. That God hath appointed *but one Mediator,* or Advocate, or Interceſſor in Heaven for us; by whoſe Mediation we are to offer up all our Prayers and Services to God.

2. That this Doctrine of *one Mediator* is moſt agreeable to one main End and Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, and of our Saviour's coming into the World, which was, to deſtroy Idolatry.

3. That from the Nature and Reaſon of the thing (*viz.* becauſe Interceſſion for Sinners is founded in the Merit of that Sacrifice, by which Expiation of Sin

Sin is made) there can be no other *Mediator of Interceſſion*, but he who hath made Expiation for Sin, by a Sacrifice offered to God for that purpoſe; and this *Jeſus Chriſt* only hath done. Thus far I have gone: I proceed now to the

*Fourth* thing which I propoſed in the handling of this Argument, namely, to ſhew how contrary to this Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion, concerning *one only Mediator and Interceſſor* in Heaven for us, the Doctrine and the Practice of the Church of *Rome* is in this matter; namely, in their Invocation of Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints, and flying to their help, and making uſe of their Mediation and Interceſſion with God for Sinners.

And that I may proceed more diſtinctly in this Argument, I ſhall handle it under theſe particular Heads.

*Firſt*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, That the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* in this matter, is contrary to the Doctrine of the Chriſti-

an Religion, concerning *one only Mediator and Interceſſor* in Heaven for us.

*Secondly*, That it is contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of the Chriſtian Church, for ſeveral of the firſt Ages of it.

*Thirdly*, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer their chief Pretences and Excuſes for this Doctrine and Practice.

*Fourthly*, To ſhew that this Doctrine and Practice of theirs is not only needleſs, being no where commanded by God, but uſeleſs alſo, and unprofitable.

*Fifthly*, And not only ſo, but very dangerous and impious; becauſe contrary to the Chriſtian Religion, and greatly derogating from the Vertue and Merit of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and from the Honour of *the only Mediator between God and Men.*

*Firſt*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* in this Matter, is contrary

contrary to the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion concerning *one only Mediator and Interceſſor* in Heaven for us; namely, in their Invocation of Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints, and flying to their Help, and making uſe of their Mediation and Interceſſion with God for Sinners.

That Jeſus Chriſt is *our only Mediator and Interceſſor* with God in Heaven, by whom we have acceſs to God in any Action of Religious Worſhip, and that all our Prayers and Services are to be offered up to God only by him, and in his Name and Mediation, and no other, I have plainly ſhewed from Scripture, and proved it by an invincible Argument, taken likewiſe from Scripture; namely, becauſe the Efficacy and Prevalency of his Mediation and Interceſſion is founded in the Vertue and Merit of his Sacrifice; and that he is therefore *the only Mediator between God and Men*, becauſe *he only gave himſelf a Ranſom for all*; he is therefore *our only Advocate with the Father*, becauſe *he only is the Propitiation for*

*our Sins, and for the Sins of the whole World.*

I have ſhewed likewiſe, that the Scripture excludes Angels from being our Mediators with God, from the main Scope and Deſign of the Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* ; and much more are the Saints departed excluded from this Office, being inferior to the Angels, not only in the Dignity and Excellency of their Beings, but very probably in the Degree of their Knowledge.

In ſhort, Prayer is a proper act of Religious Worſhip, and therefore peculiar to God alone ; and we are commanded *to worſhip the Lord our God, and to ſerve him only:* And no where in Scripture are we directed to addreſs our Prayers and Supplications and Thankſgivings to any but *God alone*, and only in the Name and Mediation of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf hath taught us, to put up all our Prayers to God our heavenly Father, Luke 11. 2, *when you pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven.* Which plainly ſhews, to whom all our Prayers are to be addreſs'd; and unleſs we can call

call an Angel, or the Bleſſed Virgin, or a Saint, *Our Father*, we can pray to none of them. And elſewhere he as plainly directs us, by whom we are to apply our ſelves to God, and in whoſe Name and Mediation we are to put up all our Requeſts to him, *John* 14.6. *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*: And then it follows, Ver. 13, 14. *And whatſoever ye ſhall ask in my name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ſhall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* Nothing is clearer in the whole Bible, than *one Mediator between God and men, Chriſt Jeſus*, and that he is *our only Advocate and Interceſſor* with God in Heaven for us.

*Secondly*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, That the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* in this matter, is contrary to that of the Chriſtian Church, for ſeveral of the firſt Ages of it.

As for the Ages of the Apoſtles, it hath been already proved out of their Writings. That it was not practiſed in the three firſt Ages, we have the

Acknowledgment of Cardinal *Perron*, and others of their learned Writers; and they give a very remarkable Reaſon for it; namely, Becauſe the Worſhip and Invocation of Saints and Angels, and addreſſing our Prayers to God by them, might have ſeem'd to have given Countenance to the Heathen Idolatry. From whence I cannot forbear, by the way, to make theſe two Obſervations. 1. That the Invocation of Saints and Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and addreſſing our ſelves to God by their Mediation, was not in thoſe Primitive Ages eſteemed a Duty of the Chriſtian Religion; becauſe, if it had, it could not hve been omitted for fear of the Scandal conſequent upon it: and if it was not a Duty then, by what Authority or Law, can it be made ſo ſince? 2. That this Practice is very lyable to the Suſpicion of Idolatry; and ſurely every Chriſtian cannot but think it fit, that the Church of Chriſt ſhould, like a chaſt Spouſe, not only be free from the Crime, but from all Suſpicion of Idolatry.

And

And for the next Ages after the Apoſtles, nothing is plainer, than that both their Doctrine and Practice were contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of the preſent Church of *Rome* in this Matter. The moſt ancient Fathers of the Chriſtian Church do conſtantly define Prayer, to be *an Addreſs to God*; and therefore it cannot be made to any but God only: And after the riſe of *Arianiſm*, they argued for the Divinity of Chriſt, againſt the *Arians*, from our praying to him; which Argument were of no force, if Prayers might be made to any but God; and this was in the beginning of the Fourth Age.

And we no where find any mention of thoſe Diſtinctions, of *Gods by Nature*, and *Gods by Participation* (as *Bellarmin* calls the Angels and Saints) or of *a ſupream* and *inferior Religious Worſhip*; or of *a Mediator of Redemption*, and *a Mediator of Interceſſion*; which are ſo commonly made uſe of by the Church of *Rome* in this Controverſie.

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And, which is as conſiderable as any of the reſt, the ancient Fathers were generally of Opinion, that the Saints were not admitted to the Beatifick Viſion, till after the Day of Judgment; and this is acknowledged by the moſt Learned of the Church of *Rome*. But this very Opinion, takes away the Foundation of praying to Saints; becauſe the Church of *Rome* grounds it upon their Reigning with Chriſt in Heaven, and upon the Light and Knowledge which is communicated to them in the Beatifick Viſion; and if ſo, then they who believed the Saints not yet to be admitted to this Viſion, could have no Reaſon or Ground to pray to them.

And *Laſtly*, the ancient Church prayed *for* Saints departed, and *for* the Bleſſed Virgin her ſelf; and therefore could not pray *to them*, as Interceſſors for them in Heaven, for *whom* they themſelves interceded upon Earth. And therefore the Church of *Rome*, in complyance with the change which they have made in their Doctrine, have changed *the Miſſal* in that point,

point, and inſtead of praying for St. *Leo*, (one of their Popes) as they were wont to do in their ancient *Miſſal*, in this form, *Grant, O Lord, that this Oblation may be profitable to the Soul of thy Servant* Leo; the *Collect* is now changed in the preſent *Roman Miſſal*, into this Form, *Grant, O Lord, that by the Interceſſion of Bleſſed* Leo, *this Offering may be profitable to us.* And (as the Gloſs upon the *Canon Law* obſerves) this change was made in their *Miſſal* upon very good Reaſon; *becauſe anciently they pray'd for* Leo, *but now they pray to him*; which is an ingenuous Acknowledgment, that both the Doctrine and Practice of their Church are plainly changed, from what they anciently were in this matter.

What the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome* are in this matter, all the World ſees, and they themſelves are ſo aſhamed of them, that of late all their endeavours have been, to repreſent them otherwiſe than in truth they are, and to obtrude upon us *a new Popery*, which they think themſelves better able to defend than *the old*; which yet they have not ſhewn, that they

they are ſo well able to do; and therefore now, inſtead of defending the true Doctrines and Practices of their own Church, they would fain mince and diſguiſe them, and change them into ſomething that comes nearer to the *Proteſtant* Doctrine in thoſe points: As if they had no way to defend their own Doctrines, but by ſeeming to deſert them, and by bringing them as near to ours as poſſibly they can.

But take them, as they have mollified them and par'd them, to render them more plauſible and tenable; that which ſtill remains of them, I mean *the ſolemn Invocation of Saints and Angels, as Mediators and Interceſſors with God in Heaven for us*, is plainly contrary both to the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity.

As for the Age of the Apoſtles, I have already ſhewn it; and the matter is as clear for ſeveral of the next following Ages, as I ſhall briefly ſhew, from a few very plain Teſtimonies.

In

In the Age next to the Apoſtles, we have an Epiſtle of one of the Seven Churches, (I mean the Church of *Smyrna*) in which, in Vindication of themſelves from that Calumny which was raiſed againſt them by the *Jews*, among the Heathen, *That if they permitted the Chriſtians to have the body of the martyred* Polycarp, *they would leave Chriſt, to worſhip* Polycarp; I ſay, in vindication of themſelves from this Calumny, they declare themſelves thus, *Not knowing* (ſay they) *that we can neither leave Chriſt, who ſuffered for the Salvation of the world of thoſe that are ſaved, nor Worſhip any other*; or, (as it is in the old *Latin* Tranſlation) *nor offer up the Supplication of Prayer to any other Perſon; for as for Jeſus Chriſt, we adore him, as being the Son of God; but as for the Martyrs, we love them, as the Diſciples and Imitators of the Lord.* So that they plainly exclude the Saints from any ſort of Religious Worſhip, of which Prayer or Invocation was always eſteemed a very conſiderable part.

*Ireneus*

*Ireneus* likewiſe tells us, (*l.* 2.) That *the Church doth nothing* (ſpeaking of the Miracles which were wrought) *by the Invocation of Angels, nor by Inchantment, nor by any other wicked Arts; but by Prayers to the Lord who made all things, and by calling on the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Here all invocation of Angels, and by the ſame or greater Reaſon, of the Saints, is excluded. And *Clemens Alexandrinus* delivers it as the Doctrine of the Church; That *ſince there is but one good God, therefore both we and the Angels pray to him, both for the giving, and the continuance of good things.*

In the next Age, *Origen* is ſo full and expreſs in this matter, that it is not poſſible for any Proteſtant to ſpeak more poſitively and clearly, *l.* 8. *cont. Celſum*, where he does on ſet purpoſe declare and vindicate the Chriſtian Doctrine and Practice in this matter; *We worſhip* (ſays he) *the one only God, and his one only Son, and Word, and Image, with our utmoſt Supplications and Honours, bringing our Prayers to the God of all things, through his only begotten Son:*

And

And afterward, *Away* (ſays he) *with* Celſus *his Counſel, that ſays, we muſt pray to Demons* (or Angels) *for we muſt pray only to God who is above all; we muſt pray to the only Begotten and firſt Born of every Creature, and we muſt beſeech him to offer up our Prayers which we make to him, to his God and our God:* And again, (ſpeaking of Angels) *As for the Favour of others (if that be to be regarded) we know, that Thouſands of Thouſands ſtand before him, and Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand miniſter unto him; theſe are our Brethren and Friends, who when they ſee us imitating their Piety towards God, work together to the Salvation of thoſe who call upon God, and pray as they ought to do,* that is, *to God only*; and (*l.* 5.) where *Celſus* urges him with this, That *the Scriptures call Angels Gods*, he tells him, *that the Scriptures do not call the Angels Gods, with any Deſign to require us to worſhip and adore them inſtead of God, who are Miniſtring Spirits, and bring Meſſages, and Bleſſings down to us from God*; *for* (ſays he) *all Supplication, and Prayer, and Interceſſion, and giving of Thanks, muſt be ſent up to God, who is above all, by the High Prieſt, who is above all Angels, and is the living Word and God.*

And

And though *Angels* be only here mentioned, yet by the ſame Reaſon, *all other Creatures* are excluded, from being the Objects of our Religious Worſhip and Invocation, or, *Mediators of Interceſſion* with God for us; becauſe *all Supplication, and Prayer, and Interceſſion, and Thankſgiving, muſt be ſent up to God by our High-Prieſt, who is the living Word and God. Let us then alſo* (as he goes on) *make Supplication to the Word himſelf, and Interceſſion, and giving of Thanks, and Prayer: but to Invocate Angels is not reaſonable; ſince we do not comprehend the Knowledge of them, which is above us; and if we could comprehend the Knowledge of them, which is wonderful and ſecret, this very Knowledge which declares to us their Nature and Office, would not allow us to preſume to pray to any other, but to the God who is Lord over all, and abundantly ſufficient for all, by our Saviour the Son of God.* Where he gives two plain Reaſons, why we ought to pray only to God, and to offer up our Prayers only by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God and our Saviour: *Firſt*, Becauſe *he only is Lord over all*, and therefore the Worſhip of Prayer is to be given to him only. And then,

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, Becauſe we have no need of any other Patron and Benefactor, or of any other Mediator and Advocate, *he is abundantly ſufficient for all, by our Saviour the Son of God.*

In the ſame Age *Novatian*, in his Book concerning the Trinity, makes uſe of this Argument, to prove the Divinity of Chriſt; becauſe he hears our Prayers, when we call upon him. *If Chriſt* (ſays he) *be only a Man, how can he be preſent every where to thoſe that call upon him? ſince this is not the Nature of Man, but of God, to be able to be preſent every where? If Chriſt be only a Man, why do we in our Prayers call upon him as Mediator; ſince Prayer to a Man is deemed ineffectual to help or ſave us? If Chriſt be only a Man, why do we put our Hope in him; ſince Hope in Man is accurſed in Scripture?*

In the IV*th.* Century, the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, under the Name of *Clemens Romanus*, (but undoubtedly written in that Age) give us a pregnant negative Teſtimony in this matter; for though a great many of the publick Prayers are there ſet down at large, yet they are

are all directed to *God alone*, and not the leaſt Intimation there of any Prayer made to *the Angels*, or *Saints*, or even to *the Virgin Mary*; nor of their Interceſſion or Aid; which now makes ſo great a part of the Publick Devotions of the Church of *Rome*.

*Athanaſius*, in his fourth Oration againſt the *Arians*, proves the Unity of the Father and the Son, from 1 *Theſ.* 3. 11. *Now God himſelf, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, direct our way unto you.* From whence he argues thus, *One would not pray to receive any thing from the Father and the Angels, or from any other Creature; nor would one ſay, God and the Angels give thee this; but one would pray to receive any thing from the Father and the Son, becauſe of their Unity and Uniform Gift; for all things that are given by the Father, are given by the Son, and there is nothing which the Father doth not work by the Son*; and then concludes, *that it doth not belong to any, but to God alone, to Bleſs and grant Deliverances.* This I take to be a very remarkable Teſtimony againſt the Church of *Rome*, who in their *Publick Offices* joyn the Bleſſed Virgin

gin with God, and our Saviour, in the ſame Breath, and ſometimes put her before her Son; *Let* Mary *and her Son bleſs us*; as it is in *the Office of the Bleſſed Virgin*; in direct contradiction to what I juſt now cited out of *Athanaſius*: and nothing ſo common in their Mouths, as *Jeſu Maria*, *Jeſus* and *Mary*; nothing more frequent in their moſt eminent Writers, than to joyn them together in their Doxologies and Thankſgivings. *Glory to God, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and to Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays *Gregory de Valentia*. And *Bellarmin* himſelf concludes his Diſputations concerning the Worſhip of Saints; in theſe Words, *Praiſe be to God, and to the Bleſſed Virgin Mother* Mary; *likewiſe to Jeſus Chriſt, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, be Praiſe and Glory*. And in the very *Roman Miſſal* it ſelf, they make confeſſion of their Sins *to God Almighty, and the Bleſſed Virgin* Mary, *to St.* Michael *the Archangel, and to all the Saints*. And in their Abſolution, they join together *the Paſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Merits of the Bleſſed Virgin, and of all the Saints, for the Remiſſion of Sins*. And is not this the

very thing which *Athanaſius* doth ſo ſeverely condemn?

I have mentioned before the Council of *Laodicea*, which about the middle of this Century condemns the Worſhip of Angels, and Praying to them, as down-right Idolatry: And towards the end of this Fourth Age, and in the begining of the Fifth, when it is pretended that praying to Saints did begin (though it was rather by way of Apoſtrophe and Rhetorical Addreſs, than of formal Invocation) there are expreſs Teſtimonies againſt it of the moſt eminent Fathers of that time. I will inſtance but in three, *Epiphanius*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, and St. *Auguſtine*.

*Epiphanius*, in his Confutation of the Hereſie of the *Collyridians* (which he calls the Hereſie of the Women, becauſe they firſt began the Worſhip of the Virgin *Mary*) declares moſt expeſly againſt the worſhip of any Creature whatſoever; *For neither* (ſays he) *is* Elias *to be worſhipped, though he is reckoned among the living* (meaning that he was taken up into Heaven, Body and Soul) *nor* John, *nor any other of the Saints:* And

And as for the Virgin *Mary*, he particularly adds, *that if God will not have us to worſhip the Angels, how much more would he not have us to worſhip her that was born of* Anna? And concludes, *let* Mary *be had in Honour; but let the Lord be worſhipped.*

St. *Chryſoſtom*, in a long Diſcourſe, perſuades Men to addreſs their Prayers immediately to God, and not as we addreſs our ſelves to great Men by their Officers and Favourites; and tells us, *that there is no need of ſuch Interceſſors with God, who is not ſo ready to grant our Petitions, when we entreat him by others, as when we pray to him our ſelves.*

*Laſtly*, St. *Auguſtin*, *becauſe the Scriptures pronounce him accurſed, that puteth his truſt in Man*; from thence he argues, that *therefore we ought not to ask of any other, but of our Lord God, either the Grace to do well, or the Reward of it.* The contrary to which I am ſure is done in ſeveral of the Publick Prayers uſed in the Church of *Rome*. And, *l.* 22. *de Civ. Dei*, he expreſly tells us, that *the Names of the Martyrs were*

*recited in their Prayers at the Altar; but they were not invocated by the Prieſt, who did celebrate Divine Service.* And in the Third Council of *Carthage* (which was in St. *Auguſtin*'s time) *it is enjoined* (Can. 33.) *that all Prayers that were made at the Altar, ſhould be directed to the Father.* Which how it is obſerved in the Church of *Rome*, we all know.

To conclude this matter, it cannot be made appear, that there were any Prayers to Saints, in the Publick Offices of the Church, till towards the end of the Eighth Century. For in the Year 754. the Invocation of Saints was condemned by a Council of 338 Biſhops at *Conſtantinople*, as is acknowledged by the Second Council of *Nice*, which firſt eſtabliſh'd this Superſtition, in the Year 787; and this very Council was condemned Seven Years after, in a Council at *Frankfort*, and declared void, and to be no otherwiſe eſteemed of, than the Council of *Ariminum*.

Thus you ſee, when this Doctrine and Practice, ſo contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of a great many of the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church, was

was firſt eſtabliſhed, namely, at the ſame time with *the Worſhip of Images*, and when the firſt Foundation of *Tranſubſtantiation* was laid; which as they began at the ſame time, ſo they are very fit to go together.

I ſhould now have proceeded to the next thing which I propos'd, namely, to anſwer the chief Pretences which are made for this Doctrine and Practice. But of *That* in the following Diſcourſe.

# A SERMON ON

## 1 Tim. II. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all.*

IN the *Two* former Diſcourſes upon this *Text*, I have treated on the *Second Propoſition* I laid down from the Words; *viz. That there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* In treating on this *Propoſition*, I ſhewed,

*Firſt*, That it is agreeable to Scripture.

*Secondly*, That it is agreeable to one great End and Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, and of our Saviour's coming into the World, which was to deſtroy Idolatry out of it.

*Thirdly*, That from the Nature and Reaſon of the thing, there can be *but one Mediator* or *Interceſſor* in Heaven with God for Sinners; and that he can be no other than *Jeſus Chriſt*.

*Fourthly*, I ſhew'd how contrary to this Doctrine, the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome* is, in their Invocation of Angels, and the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints, and making uſe of their *Mediation* and *Interceſſion* with God for Sinners.

This I endeavour'd to do, by ſhewing, 1*ſt*. How contrary this is to the Doctrine of the Scriptures. 2*ly*. How contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of the Church, for ſeveral of the firſt Ages of it. And thus far I have gone.

I proceed now in the 3*d*. Place, to anſwer the chief Pretences and Excuſes

ſes which are made by thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, for this Doctrine and Practice.

As, 1. That they only ſay, that it is lawful to Pray to Angels and Saints; but do not enjoyn and require it. To this I anſwer Two things.

(1.) In ſaying that it is lawful to pray to Saints and Angels (if they went no farther) they ſay, that which they can never make good; becauſe Prayer is an Act of Religious Worſhip, and peculiar and proper to God only, and therefore cannot be given to any Creature, Angel or Saint. This I have proved from Scripture, where our Saviour commands us, *when we pray, to ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*; that is, to direct and addreſs our Prayers to God only. And St. *Paul* likewiſe forbids *the worſhipping Angels* by invocating of them, and making uſe of them as *Mediators* between God and us, in his Epiſtle to the *Colloſſians:* which *Theodoret* expreſly interprets concerning the Invocation of Angels, and applying our ſelves to them, as *Mediators* and *Interceſſors* with God

in Heaven for us. And the Council of *Laodicea* declares this Practice to be Idolatry. Beſides that the ancient Fathers of the Chriſtian Church, for above Three Hundred Years, never ſpake of praying to any, but God only; and do expreſly condemn the Invocation of Angels, much more of the Saints, who are Inferior to them; and therefore they always define *Prayer* to be *an Addreſs to God, a Converſing and Diſcourſing with God*; which would be a falſe Definition of Prayer, if it were lawful to pray to any but to God only. All which conſidered, one may juſtly wonder at the Confidence of ſome Men, who would have it taken for granted, without any Proof, that the Invocation of Saints and Angels is Lawful.

(2.) If it were true, that it is lawful to pray to Angels and Saints; it is not true, that the Church of *Rome* does only declare it to be lawful, but does not require and enjoyn it; as ſome of their late Writers pretend.

With what Face can this be ſaid, when there are ſo many Prayers to Angels

gels and Saints, and eſpecially to the Bleſſed Virgin, in *the Publick Offices* of their Church, in which all are ſuppoſed to join, as much as in the Prayers which are put up to God by the Prieſt? 'Tis true indeed, the People underſtand neither; but they are preſent at both, and join in both alike; that is, as much as men can be ſaid to join in that which they do not underſtand; as that Church ſuppoſeth People may do, and receive great Edification alſo, by joining with the Prieſt, in a Service which they do not underſtand. But how they can be edified by what they do not underſtand, I muſt confeſs my ſelf as little able to underſtand, as they do their Prayers. But whether they underſtand them, or not, 'tis certain, that if the People have any part in the Publick Prayers of the Church, they are bound to pray to Angels and Saints.

And if the Creed of Pope *Pius* IV. framed by Virtue of an Order of the Council of *Trent*, be of any Authority with them; one of the Articles of it is, that *I do firmly hold, that the Saints, which Reign together with Chriſt, are to be wor-*

*worſhipped and invocated, and that they do offer up Prayers to God for us.* And this Creed all the Governours of Cathedrals and Superior Churches, and all who hold any Dignity, or Benefice with Cure of Souls from them, are bound Solemnly to make Profeſſion of, and ſwear to, and carefully to cauſe it to be held and taught, and Preached by all that are under their Charge; ſo that they are to teach the People, *that the Saints which reign together with Chriſt, are to be worſhipped and prayed to.* And therefore unleſs People are not bound to do that, which they are to be taught it is their Duty to do, they are by Virtue of this Article, required *to worſhip and pray to Saints.* And if *the Publick Office* of their Church be *the Publick Worſhip*; and Pope *Pius* his Creed, *the Publick Faith* of the *Romiſh Church*, no Man can be either of the Faith, or in the Communion of that Church, who does not only hold it lawful, but his Duty, *to worſhip the Saints in Heaven, and to pray to them*, and accordingly does joyn in the worſhip of them, and Prayers to them, as much as in any other part of Divine Service.

2. Another

2. Another Pretence for this Doctrine and Practice, is, that the Saints in Heaven do pray for us; and what is this but to be *Mediators* and *Interceſſors* with God for us? And if ſo, why may not we pray to them, to intercede with God for us? To this I anſwer *four* things.

(1.) We do not deny that the Saints in Heaven pray for us that are here upon Earth, becauſe they may do ſo for any thing we know; but that they do ſo, is more than can be proved, either by clear Teſtimony of Scripture, or by any convincing Argument from Reaſon, and therefore no Doctrine or Practice can be ſafely grounded upon it.

(2.) Tho' it were certain, that the Saints in Heaven do pray for us; yet they are not *Mediators* and *Interceſſors* properly ſo called: for all *Interceſſion* ſtrictly and properly ſo call'd, is in Virtue of *a Sacrifice* offered by him that intercedes; and therefore he only by whom Expiation of Sin is made upon Earth, can be properly *an Interceſſor* with God in Heaven; but this, no Angel or Saint hath done, or can do.

And

And (as I have ſhew'd in ſome of the former Diſcourſes) it is the plain ſcope of a great part of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* to prove this very thing, that under the Goſpel *we have an High Prieſt that lives for ever, and appears in the Preſence of God for us*, in the Virtue of *that Blood which he ſhed, and that Sacrifice which he offered upon the Croſs for the Expiation of Sin:* and that *by this High Prieſt only we have Acceſs with Freedom and Confidence to the Throne of Grace*, and by him do offer up all our Prayers and Thankſgivings, and all other acts of Religious Worſhip to God: And this the Apoſtle ſhews was typified in an imperfect Manner, by the *Jewiſh High Prieſt* under the Law, who was but *one*, and none but *he only could enter into the Holy of Holies, with the Blood of the Sacrifices, that were ſlain and burnt without, by which Blood he made an Atonement, and Interceded for the People*; and though every Prieſt might pray for the People, and the People for one another, which is a kind of *Interceſſion*; yet that peculiar kind of *Interceſſion*, which was performed by *the High Prieſt*, in *the Holy of Holies*, in virtue of *the Sacrifice* that was ſlain without, could not be made,

made, but by *the High Prieſt only*. By all which was typified *our High Prieſt* under the Goſpel, *who only hath made Expiation of Sin, by the Sacrifice of himſelf, and is enter'd into Heaven, to appear in the Preſence of God for us; where he lives for ever, to make Interceſſion for us*, in virtue of *that Blood which was ſhed* for the Expiation of Sin, and which can only be preſented to God, by him that ſhed it. And this is properly Interceſſion, like that of *the High Prieſt* under the Law for the People of *Iſrael*; and this kind of *Interceſſion* can be made by none in Heaven for us, but only by *the High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, Jeſus the Son of God*; and by none elſe can we offer up our Prayers and Services to God, and conſequently we cannot addreſs our ſelves to any other, Angels or Saints, as *Mediators* with God for us.

(3.) Suppoſing it certain, that the Saints do pray for us; yet we may not addreſs ſolemn Prayer to them to pray for us, becauſe Prayer and ſolemn Invocation is a part of that Religious Worſhip which is peculiar to God.

(4.) Sup-

(4.) Suppoſing it not only certain that the Saints in Heaven do pray for us, but likewiſe that they might be proper *Mediators* and *Interceſſors* with God for us; yet we ought not to pray to them, becauſe they cannot hear us, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew fully by and by.

3. Another of their Pretences or Excuſes for this Practice, is, that praying to Saints to pray for us, is no more than what we do to good Men upon Earth, when we deſire them to pray for us. So the late *Expounder of the Catholique Faith*, namely the Biſhop of *Meaux*, tells us, *that they pray to the Saints in Heaven, in the ſame order of Brotherly ſociety, with which we entreat our Brethren upon Earth to pray for us.*

But that this is not a true Repreſentation either of their Doctrine or Practice in this matter, will appear by theſe following Conſiderations.

(1.) That they pray to the Angels and Saints in Heaven, with the ſame ſolemn Circumſtances of Religious Worſhip, that they pray to God himſelf,

ſelf; in the ſame Place, and in the ſame humble Poſture, and in the ſame Religious Offices and Services, in which they pray to God; which ſurely is never done by any to *their Brethren upon Earth.*

(2.) That in their Prayers and Thankſgivings, they joyn the Angels and the Bleſſed Virgin and the Saints together with God and Chriſt, as if (to uſe their own Phraſe) it were *in the ſame order of Brotherly Society*, and as if they were all equally the Objects of our Invocation and Praiſe; of which in my laſt Diſcourſe, I gave ſeveral plain Inſtances; but this alſo is never done to *our Brethren upon Earth.*

(3.) That in the Creed of Pope *Pius* IV. it is expreſly ſaid, *that the Saints which reign together with Chriſt, are to be Worſhiped and invocated*; but this ſurely they will not allow to be done to *our Brethren upon Earth.* And the *Council of Trent* does expreſly ground the Worſhip and Invocation of Saints, upon *their reigning with Chriſt in Heaven*; and therefore this Worſhip and Invocation of Saints muſt neceſſarily

be ſomething more, than *according to the ſame order of brotherly Society, with which we entreat our Brethren upon Earth to pray for us*: Otherwiſe the Reaſon given by the Council, of *their reigning with Chriſt in Heaven*, would be frivolous; if the ſame thing may be done to *our Brethren upon Earth.*

(4.) In the Publick Offices of their Church, they do not only pray to the Saints to pray for them, but they direct their Prayers and Thanſgivings immediately to them, for all thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits which they ask of God, and thank him for. Of which innumerable Examples might be given out of their Publick Offices; particularly in *the Office of the Bleſſed Virgin*, they pray to the Angels thus; *deliver us we beſeech you by your command from all our Sins.*

And the words of the Decree of *the Council of Trent* [*ad eorum orationes, opem, auxiliumque confugere*, to flee to their Prayers, aid, and help] unleſs we will make them a meer tautology, muſt of neceſſity ſignifie ſomething more than begging of them to pray for us. And indeed thoſe words of their

their *aid* and *help*, ſeem to be added on purpoſe to give countenance to thoſe direct Prayers which are made to the Saints, for all Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings, and which ſtill remain without any Change in their Publick Offices; and unleſs we will underſtand them contrary to the plain and obvious Senſe of thoſe Prayers, they muſt ſignifie ſomething more than Praying to the Saints to pray for us.

'Tis true indeed, that the *Catechiſm* which was framed by order of the *Council of Trent*, for the Explaining of their Doctrines, makes the difference between their Prayers to God, and to the Saints, to lie in this, that *we ſay to God, have mercy on us, or hear our Prayers; but to the Saints, pray for us.* But I have ſhewn before, that this is not the conſtant Form of Praying to Saints, but that frequently they make direct Addreſſes to them for their help and aid. And this the Compilers of the *Catechiſm* were ſenſible of, and therefore they add, *although it be Lawful in another manner to ask of the Saints themſelves, that they would have mercy on us; becauſe they are very merciful.* And is

not God ſo too? And then where is the difference between their Prayers to God, and to the Saints? If it neither lie in the *Matter* of them, nor in the *Form*, nor in the *Reaſon* of them; if we pray to them for the ſame thing, and in the ſame Form, *have mercy on us*, and our Prayers to them be grounded upon the ſame Reaſon, that our Prayers to God are, namely *becauſe they are merciful*; where then is the difference betwen them?

4. I will mention but one Pretence more, which is, that by Praying to the Saints in Heaven, they do not make them Gods; and therefore there can be no ſuſpicion or danger of Idolatry in the caſe.

To this I ſhall anſwer *Two* things.

(1.) That Praying to them in all places, and at all times, and for all ſorts of Bleſſings, does ſuppoſe them to have the incommunicable Perfections of the Divine Nature imparted to them, or inherent in them, namely his Omnipotence, and Omniſcience, and Immenſe Preſence; and to whatever Being we aſcribe

ſcribe theſe Perfections, in ſo doing we make it God; for Prayer to God is no otherwiſe an acknowledgement of his Omnipotence, Omniſcience, and Immenſe Preſence, than as we do in all places, and at all times, pray to him for all things; and ſo they do to the Saints, and that not only with vocal but with mental Prayer, which *the Council of Trent* allows, and in ſo doing, neceſſarily ſuppoſeth them to know our hearts, directly contrary to the Reaſon which *Solomon* gives, why we ſhould put up all our Prayers and Supplications to God, (1 *Kings* 8. 39.) *for thou, even thou only, knoweſt the hearts of all the Children of Men.*

(2.) *Bellarmine* is ſo ſenſible of the dint of this Argument, that he is forced to acknowledge *the Saints which reign with Chriſt in Heaven to be Gods by Participation,* (that is, a ſort of inferiour Gods, as the Heathen ſuppoſed their Mediators to be) *and that therefore we may flie to their Aid and Help, as well as to their Interceſſion and Prayers.* And is this alſo to pray to the Saints in Heaven, *in the ſame Order of Brotherly Society, with which we entreat our Brethren upon Earth to pray for us?*

This methinks is great Familiarity, to treat *Gods by participation*, juſt in the ſame manner as we do *our Brethren upon Earth.* Certainly either *Bellarmine* hath raiſed the Saints in Heaven too high, when he makes them *Gods by participation*; or the Biſhop of *Meaux* hath ſunk them too low, when he thinks they are to be treated, and addreſt to, *in the ſame Rank of Brotherly Society, with mortal Men here upon Earth.*

One cannot but think the Decree of *the Council of Trent* to be very obſcure and ambiguous, when it can admit of two ſo very different Explications. If *the infallible Judge of Controverſies* can ſpeak no plainer; I think we had even beſt ſtick to *the Bible*, and hear what *God* ſays in his Word, and endeavour to underſtand it as well as we can.

I proceed now to the *Fourth* thing which I propoſed, namely, to ſhew that this Practice of theirs, of Addreſſing our ſelves to Angels and Saints, and making uſe of their Mediation, to offer up our Prayers and Thankſgivings to God, is not only Needleſs, being

being no where commanded by God; but Uſeleſs alſo, and unprofitable.

They are ſo far from pretending, that it is *commanded* by *God*, that ſeveral of their later Writers would fain make us believe that it is not *enjoyned* by their *Councils*; but only declared to be lawful, or at moſt, but recommended as profitable. Nor is there any Example of Praying to Saints, either in the Old or New Teſtament: Not in the Old, (as they of the Church of *Rome* confeſs) *becauſe the Saints were not then admitted into Heaven*; nor in the New, *for fear of ſcandalizing the Jews, and of making the Gentiles think they propoſed new Gods, and new Mediators to them, inſtead of the old*; which are the Reaſons given by their own Writers.

And it is *Needleſs* likewiſe; becauſe the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt alone is ſufficient for us, and more than the Interceſſion of Millions of Saints and Angels. *He* alone *is able to ſave to the utmoſt all thoſe that come to God by him*, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks. Hath not he made a clear and full Pro-

miſe to us, that *whatever we ask in his Name, ſhall be granted us*? And have we any Reaſon to doubt, either of his Inclination and good will, or of his Power and Intereſt to do us good? What need then is there to ſue for the Favour, or to take in the Aſſiſtance of any other, even of thoſe who are thought to be moſt powerful, and the chief Miniſters and Favourites in that Heavenly Court? After ſuch an Aſſurance that my Buſineſs will be effectually done there, by that great *Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*; why ſhould I apply my ſelf to St. *Peter*, though he be ſaid to keep the Keys of Heaven; or to *Michael* the Arch-Angel, though he be *the chief of the Miniſtring Spirits*; or to *the Bleſſed Virgin* her ſelf, notwithſtanding thoſe glorious Titles of the *Queen of Heaven*, and the *Mother of Mercy*, which they of the Church of *Rome*, are pleaſed to beſtow upon her, without her conſent, and as may reaſonably be preſumed, againſt her will?

I will put a Caſe, which may help to render this matter a little more plain and

and ſenſible to us, ſo as every Man may be able to judge of it. Suppoſe a King ſhould conſtitute his Son, *the great Maſter of Requeſts*; with this expreſs Declaration and Aſſurance, that all Petitions that were addreſt to him by his Son, ſhould be graciouſly received and anſwered; in this caſe, though every Man might uſe his own Diſcretion, at his own Peril, and take what courſe he pleaſed, yet I ſhould moſt certainly prefer all my Petitions to the King, in the way which he had ſo plainly directed, and ſhould trouble never a Courtier of them all with my Buſineſs; for fear the King ſhould think, that I did either diſtruſt his Royal Word, or deſpiſe his Son, by my ſoliciting the Aid and Help of every little Courtier, after I had put my Petition into the Hands of this *great Maſter of Requeſts*.

And now I will not diſtruſt any of your Underſtandings ſo far as to make the Application. I will only add, that it is an Eternal Rule of Truth, and which never fails in any Caſe, *Fruſtra fit per plura, quod fieri poteſt per pauciora, it is in vain to attempt that by more*

*more Ways and Means, which may as well and as effectually be done by one*; becauſe this would be perfect loſs of time and pains: And therefore they who would ſend us ſo far about, as to trouble all the Saints and Angels in Heaven with our Petitions, when they cannot deny but that *our great Mediator* is alone ſufficient; do ſeem to me to ſend us upon a very ſleeveleſs Errand: So that if with all their Skill in Fencing, they could defend this Practice from being *Unlawful*, yet this one thing is a ſufficient Objection in Reaſon againſt it, that it is perfectly *Needleſs*.

Or if we could imagine any *need* of this; all Addreſſes to them muſt be *vain* and *unprofitable*, if they do not know our Wants, and hear our Prayers that are put up to them; which St. *Auguſtin* thought they do not know and hear, *Fatendum eſt* (ſaith he, *L. De Curâ pro mortuis*) *neſcire quidem mortuos, quid hic agatur*; *it muſt be acknowledged, that the Dead are ignorant of what is done here.* This was his Opinion; but we are certain that they cannot know our Wants, nor hear our

our Prayers at all Times and in all Places; unleſs they can either be preſent every where, which no Finite Being can be; or elſe God be pleaſed in ſome ſupernatural way to communicate to them the Knowledge of our Wants, and of the Prayers which we put up to them; which we can never know that he does, unleſs he have communinated to us, that he is pleaſed to do ſo, of which the Scripture no where gives us the leaſt Intimation.

But becauſe they pretend, that the Scripture gives us ſome hints of this, I ſhall briefly examine what they ſay about this Matter.

I. That the Angels know our Condition here below, becauſe they are ſaid *to rejoyce at the Converſion of a Sinner*; and therefore the Saints do likewiſe know our Condition, becauſe *they ſhall be like the Angels.* But this is not ſaid of them till after the Reſurrection, when we ſhall have no Occaſion to pray to them. Beſides that it may well enough be ſuppoſed, that God may reveal both to the

the Angels and Saints in Heaven, the Converſion of a Sinner, becauſe it may contribute to the Increaſe of their Joy and Happineſs: But will it hence follow, that God reveals to them all other Circumſtances of our Condition, our Dangers and Temptations and Troubles, our Sins and our Sufferings, the Knowledge whereof would no ways contribute to the Increaſe of their Happineſs? And yet in Order to their Interceſſion with God for us, their Knowledge of theſe things would be moſt beneficial to us.

II. Becauſe *the rich Man* was concerned in Hell for the Salvation of his Relations on Earth, they argue that it is much more probable, that the Saints in Heaven are concerned for us, and are ready to pray for us, and therefore it is very credible, that ſome way or other, they have the Knowledge of our Condition and Wants, though we cannot certainly tell what that particular way is.

To which I anſwer.

(1.) That it is a known Rule amongſt all

all Divines, that no certain Argument can be drawn from the Circumſtances of a Parable, but only from the main Scope and Intention of it; nor is it ſo likely that the wicked in Hell ſhould have any ſhare in *that*, which St. *Paul* tells us, is the great Vertue of the Saints in Heaven, I mean *Charity*; and if they have it not, then no Argument can be drawn from it. Some of their Commentators think, that this Motion of *the rich Man* to *Abraham* concerning his Brethren, did not proceed from Charity to *them*, but to *himſelf*; leſt his Torment and Puniſhment ſhould be increaſed by their coming to Hell, by the means of the ill Example which he had given them, when he was upon Earth: And Cardinal *Cajetan* thinks that he was concerned for his Brethren out of Pride and Ambition, and becauſe it would be for the Honour of his Family, to have ſome of them in that Glory (ſo far above any thing in this World) which he ſaw *Abraham* and *Lazarus* poſſeſt of. This is a Reaſon, which I confeſs I ſhould not have thought on; and yet perhaps it might be likely enough to enter into the mind

of

of a *Cardinal.* And I cannot but obſerve by the way, that this Petition or Requeſt, which *the rich Man* in Hell made to *Abraham*, is the only Inſtance we meet with in Scripture, of any thing like a Prayer that was put up to any of the Saints in Heaven.

Well! but ſuppoſe that *the rich Man* in Hell had this Charity for his Brethren; and we will eaſily agree, that the Saints in Heaven have much more Charity, not only for their Kindred, but for all men here upon Earth; let us now conſider the particular way and manner which *the great Divines* of the Church of *Rome* (I mean *the Schoolmen*, who cannot be content to be ignorant of any thing) do aſſign of the Knowledge which the Saints in Heaven have of the Condition and Wants of men here below.

They tell us that they know all our Prayers and Wants in the Glaſs of the Deity, or Trinity; which Metaphor *of the Glaſs of the Deity, or Trinity*, if it have any meaning, it muſt be this, that the Saints in Heaven beholding the Face of God, or the Divine Eſſence, in which

which the Knowledge of all things is contained, they may in that Glaſs ſee all things that God knows: But then they ſpoil all this fine Speculation again, by telling us, that this Glaſs does not *neceſſarily* repreſent to them all that Knowledge which is in the Divine Mind; but that it is a kind of *voluntary* Glaſs, in which the Saints are only permitted to ſee ſo much as God pleaſeth; but how much that is, they cannot tell us. Which amounts to no more than this; that the Saints in Heaven know as much of our Condition here upon Earth, as God is pleaſed to reveal to them: And if this be all, it is as good a Reaſon why we ſhould pray to good men in the *Eaſt* or *Weſt-Indies*, to pray for us and help us, becauſe they alſo know as much of our Neceſſities and Prayers, as God thinks fit to reveal to them.

But if the Saints muſt have a Revelation from God of our Prayers, before that they know that we pray to them; then the ſhorteſt and ſureſt way both, is to pray to God, and not to them; or however (as *Bellarmine* confeſſeth) it were very fit to pray to God

God, before every Prayer we make to the Saints, that he would be pleaſed to reveal that Prayer to them, that upon this Signal and Notice given them by God, they may betake themſelves to pray to God for us. But unleſs it were very clear from Scripture, that God had appointed this Method, it is in Reaſon ſuch a way about, as no Man would take that could help it: And it ſeems to me to as little purpoſe; for why ſhould not a Man think God as ready to grant him all his other Requeſts, without the Mediation and Interceſſion of Saints, as this one Requeſt of *revealing our Prayers and Wants to them?* And if this way be not thought ſo convenient, I know but one more, and that is, to pray to the Saints to go to God, and beg of him, that he would be pleaſed to reveal to them our Supplications and Wants, that they may know what to pray to him for in our behalf; which is juſt ſuch a wiſe courſe, as if a Man ſhould write a Letter to his Friend that cannot read, and in a Poſtſcript deſire him, that as ſoon as he hath received it, he would carry it to one that can read, and entreat him to read

it

it to him. So that which way ſoever we put the Caſe, what courſe ſoever we take in this Matter, it will be ſo far from ſeeming Reaſonable, that we ſhall have much ado, and muſt handle the buſineſs very tenderly, to hinder it from appearing very Ridiculous.

Thus I have examined their chief Pretences from Scripture, for the Countenanceing this Doctrine and Practice, and have ſhewn how little, or rather nothing at all is there to be found for it; and *That* alone is Reaſon enough againſt it, though there were nothing in Scripture *againſt* it, that there is nothing in Scripture *for* it: But I have already produced clear Proof out of the New Teſtament *againſt* it. And becauſe they think the leaſt ſhew and probability from Scripture, a good Argument on their ſide, I will offer them a probable Argument out of the Old Teſtament, upon which though I will lay no abſolute ſtreſs, yet I believe it would puzzle them, upon their Principles, to give a clear Anſwer to it; and it is from 2 *Kings* 2. 9. where *Elijah*, juſt before he was taken up into Heaven, ſays to *Eliſha*, *Ask*

*what I ſhall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee*; thereby intimating (as one would think) that then was the laſt Opportunity of asking any thing of him: But if *Elijah* had underſtood the Matter right (as the Church of *Rome* does now) he ſhould rather have directed him, to have pray'd to him when he was in Heaven, where he would have a more powerful Intereſt, and be in a better Capacity to do him a Kindneſs. For the Reaſon the Church of *Rome* gives, why they did not pray to the Saints under the Old Teſtament (namely becauſe they were not then admitted into Heaven) will not hold in the Caſe of *Elijah*, who was taken up into Heaven Body and Soul, and conſequently in as good Circumſtances to be prayed to, as any of the Saints and Martyrs that have gone to Heaven ſince.

I ſhould now have proceeded, in the *Fifth* and *laſt* place, to have ſhewn, That this Practice is not only *Needleſs* and *Uſeleſs*, but very *Dangerous* and *Impious*; becauſe contrary to the Chriſtian Religion, and greatly derogating

gating from the Merit and Virtue of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and from the Honour of *the onely Mediator between God and Men, Chriſt Jeſus.* And indeed, how can we apply our ſelves to any other Mediators and Interceſſors with God in Heaven for us, without a groſs and apparent Contempt of *the High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, Jeſus the Son of God?* As if we either diſtruſted his Kindneſs and Affection, or his Power and Intereſt in Heaven, to obtain at God's hand all thoſe Bleſſings which we ſtand in need of. The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* tells us expreſly, that *he is able to ſave to the utmoſt all thoſe that come to God by him*; that is, who addreſs their Prayers and Supplications to God in his Name and Mediation. But if we will chuſe other Mediators for our ſelves, of whom we are not ſure that they can either hear or help us, we may fall ſhort of that Salvation, which the Apoſtle tells us we are ſecure of by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt; for *he is able*, &c.

But this hath been ſhewn ſo abundantly in the former part of this Diſcourſe, and is ſo clearly conſequent

from the whole, that I shall here conclude my Discourse upon the *Second Proposition* I laid down from the words of my Text, *viz. That there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

As to the *Third Proposition* contained in the Text, *viz. That this one Mediator, Jesus Christ, gave himself a Ransom for all*, I have treated on that Subject particularly, on another * Occasion.

* *A Sermon concerning the* Sacrifice *and* Satisfaction *of Christ. Printed in the year,* 1693.

And as to the *Fourth* and *last Proposition*, viz. *That the Mediation or Intercession of Jesus Christ is founded in his Redemption of Mankind; and because he gave himself a Ransom for all, therefore He and He only is qualified to Intercede for all men, in vertue of that Sacrifice which he offered for the Salvation of Mankind*, I judge nothing more needful to be added, to what has fallen in concerning that Subject, in my handling the *Second Proposition*, in this and the two former Sermons.

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# SERMON

Preached on

## Aſcenſion-Day, 1688.

Mark XVI. 19, 20.

*So then after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into Heaven, and ſat on the right Hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following.*

IN theſe words you have theſe *Two* great Points of Chriſtian Doctrine.

I. Our Saviour's Aſcenſion into Hea-

ven, and Exaltation at the right hand of God; *he was received up into Heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.*

II. The Effect or Conſequence of his Aſcenſion and Exaltation, which was the general and effectual Publication of the Goſpel; *they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with ſigns following.* And both theſe are very proper for this Day; but I ſhall at this time handle the *latter Point*, namely, the Effect or Conſequence of our Saviour's Aſcenſion into Heaven, and Exaltation at the right hand of God; *they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with ſigns following.*

And theſe Words contain two things in them.

I. The general Publication of the Goſpel, by the Apoſtles; *they went forth and preached every where.*

II. The Reaſon of the great Efficacy and Succeſs of it; namely, the Divine and Miraculous Power, which accompanied

accompanied the Preaching of it; *the Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with ſigns following.*

I. The general Publication of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles; *they went forth, and preached every where.* And indeed the Induſtry of the Apoſtles, and the other Diſciples, in publiſhing the Goſpel, was almoſt incredible. What Pains did they take? what Hazards did they run? what Difficulties and Diſcouragements did they contend withal in this work? and yet their Succeſs was greater than their Induſtry, and beyond all Humane Expectation: As will appear, if we conſider theſe *Five* things.

1. The *vaſt Spreading* of the Goſpel in ſo ſhort a ſpace.

2. The *wonderful Power* and *Efficacy* of it, upon the Lives and Manners of Men.

3. The *Weakneſs* and *Meanneſs* of the Inſtruments, that were imployed in this great work.

4. The *powerful Oppoſition* that was raiſed againſt it.

5. The *great Diſcouragements* to the Embracing the Profeſſion of it. I ſhall ſpeak briefly to each of theſe.

1. The *vaſt Spreading* of the Goſpel in ſo ſhort a ſpace. This is repreſented, Rev. 14. 6. by *an Angel flying through the midſt of Heaven, and preaching the Everlaſting Goſpel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.* No ſooner was the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion publiſht, and made known to the World, but it was readily embraced by great numbers, almoſt in all places where it came. And indeed ſo it was foretold, in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament. *Gen.* 49. 10. *That when Shiloh* (that is the *Meſſias*) *ſhould come, to him ſhould the gathering of the people be:* And *Iſa.* 2. 2. *That in the laſt days the mountain of the houſe of the Lord ſhould be eſtabliſht in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and that all nations ſhould flow unto it. Iſa.* 60. 8. the Prophet ſpeaking of mens ready ſubmiſſion to the Goſpel,

Goſpel, and the great number of thoſe that ſhould come in upon the Preaching of it, they are ſaid *to flie as a cloud, and as the doves to the windows.*

So quick and ſtrange a Progreſs did this new Doctrine and Religion make in the World, that in the ſpace of about 30 years, after our Saviour's death, it was not only diffuſed through the greateſt part of the *Roman* Empire, but had reached as far as *Parthia* and *India.* In which we ſee our Saviour's Prediction fully verified, that before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Goſpel ſhould be Preached in all the World. *Math.* 24. 14. *This goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, and then ſhall the end come.* But this is not all: Men were not only brought in to the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, but,

2. This Doctrine had likewiſe a *wonderful Power* and *Efficacy* upon the Lives and Manners of Men. The generality of thoſe that entertained the Goſpel, *were obedient* to it *in word and deed*, as the Apoſtle tells us, concerning the *Gentiles* that were converted to *Chri-*

*Chriſtianity*, *Rom.* 15. 18. Upon the change of their Religion, followed alſo the change of their Manners, and of their former courſe of life. They that took upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, *did thenceforth not walk as other Gentiles did, in the luſts of the fleſh, and according to the vicious courſe of the world; but did put off, concerning their former converſation, the old man, which was corrupt, according to deceitful luſts; and were renewed in the ſpirit of their mind, and did put on the new man, which after God was created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* So ſtrange an Effect had the Goſpel upon the Lives of the generality of the Profeſſors of it, that I remember *Tertullian*, in his Apology to the *Roman* Emperour and Senate, challengeth them to inſtance in any one, that bore the title of *Chriſtian*, that was condemned as a Thief, or a Murderer, or a Sacrilegious Perſon, or that was guilty of any of thoſe groſs Enormities, for which ſo many *Pagans* were every day made Examples of publick Juſtice, and Puniſht and Executed among them.

And this certainly was a very admirable

rable and happy Effect, which the Goſpel had upon Men, to work ſo great and ſudden a Change in the Lives of thoſe who entertained this Doctrine, to take them quite off from thoſe vicious Practices, which they had been brought up in, and accuſtomed to; to change their ſpirits, and the temper of their minds; and of lewd and diſhoneſt, to make them ſober and juſt, and *holy in all manner of converſation*; of proud and fierce, contentious and paſſionate, malicious and revengeful, to make them humble and meek, kind and tender-hearted, peaceable and charitable.

And that the Primitive Chriſtians were generally good Men, and of virtuous lives, is credible, becauſe their Religion did teach and oblige them to be ſuch; which tho' it be not effectual now, to make all the Profeſſors of it ſuch, as it requires they ſhould be; yet it was a very forcible Argument then, in the Circumſtances in which the Primitive Chriſtians were: For Chriſtianity was a hated and perſecuted Profeſſion: No Man could then have any inducement to embrace it, unleſs he were reſolved to practiſe it, and live according

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ing to the Rules of it; for it offered Men no Rewards and Advantages in this World; but on the contrary, threatned Men with the greateſt Temporal Inconveniences and Sufferings; and it promiſed no Happineſs to Men in the other World, upon any other terms, than of *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, and of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.*

And beſides this Conſideration, we have the beſt Teſtimony in the World, of their Unblamable Lives; *viz.* the Teſtimony of their profeſt Enemies, who did not perſecute them for any perſonal Crimes, which they charged particular Perſons withal, but only for their Religion, acknowledging them otherwiſe to be very innocent and good People. Particularly *Pliny*, in his Letter to *Trajan* the Emperour (who had given him in Charge, to make particular Enquiry concerning the Chriſtians) gives this honourable Report of them, *That there was no fault to be found in them, beſides their obſtinate refuſal to Sacrifice to the Gods; that at their Religious Meetings it was an eſſential part of their Worſhip, to oblige themſelves by a ſolemn*

*ſolemn Sacrament, againſt Murder, and Theft, and Adultery, and all manner of Wickedneſs and Vice.* No Chriſtian Hiſtorian could have given a better Character of them, than this Heathen Writer does. But,

3. The *Succeſs* of the Goſpel will appear yet more ſtrange, if we conſider the *Weakneſs* and *Meanneſs* of the Inſtruments that were employed in this great Work. A company of plain and illiterate Men, moſt of them deſtitute of the advantages of Education, went forth upon this great Deſign, weak and unarmed, unaſſiſted by any worldly intereſt, having no Secular Force and Power on their ſide, to give countenance and authority to them; and this not only at their firſt ſetting out, but they remained under theſe Diſadvantages for three Ages together.

The firſt Publiſhers of the Chriſtian Religion offered Violence to no man, did not go about to compel any by Force to entertain the Doctrine which they Preached, and to liſt themſelves of their number; they were not attended with Legions of armed Men, to diſpoſe

poſe Men for the reception of their Doctrine, by Plunder and Free-Quarter, by Violence and Tortures; this Modern Method of Converſion was not then thought of; nor did they go about to tempt and allure Men to their Way, by the Promiſes of Temporal Rewards, and by the Hopes of Riches and Honours; nor did they uſe any artificial inſinuations of Wit and Eloquence, to gain upon the Minds of Men, and ſteal their Doctrines into them; but delivered themſelves with the greateſt plainneſs and ſimplicity; and without any ſtudied Ornaments of Speech, or fine Arts of Perſwaſion, declared plainly to them, the Doctrine and Miracles, the Life, and Death, and Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, promiſing Life and Immortality to them that did believe and obey his Doctrine, and threatning Eternal Wo and Miſery in another world, to the deſpiſers of it.

And yet theſe contemptible Inſtruments, notwithſtanding all theſe diſadvantages, did their work effectually, and, by the Power of God going along with them, gained numbers every

every day to their Religion, and in a ſhort ſpace, *drew the world after them.*

Nor did they only win over the Common People, but alſo ſeveral Perſons conſiderable for their Dignity, and Eminent for their Learning, who afterwards became zealous Aſſertors of Chriſtianity, and were not aſhamed to be Inſtructed in the ſaving knowledge of the Goſpel, by ſuch mean and unlearned Perſons as the Apoſtles were; for they ſaw ſomething in them more Divine, and which carried with it a greater Power and Perſwaſion, than Humane Learning and Eloquence.

4. We will conſider the *mighty Oppoſition* that was raiſed againſt the Goſpel. At its firſt appearance it could not be otherwiſe, but that it muſt meet with a great deal of difficulty and oppoſition, from the Luſts and Vices of Men, which it did ſo plainly and ſo ſeverely declare againſt, and likewiſe from the Prejudices of Men that had been brought up in a contrary Religion; no Prejudice being ſo ſtrong, as that which is founded in Education;

Education; and of all Prejudices of Education, none ſo obſtinate and hard to be removed, as thoſe about Religion, yea, tho' they be never ſo abſurd and unreaſonable. *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods?* Men are very hardly brought off from the Religion which they have been brought up in, how little ground and reaſon ſoever there be for it; the being trained up in it, and having a reverence for it implanted in them in their tender Years, ſupplies all other defects.

Had Men been free and indifferent in Religion, when Chriſtianity firſt appeared in the world, and had they not had their Minds prepoſſeſt with other apprehenſions of God and Religion, and been inured to Rites and Superſtitions of a quite different Nature from the Chriſtian Religion; or had they at that time been weary of the Superſtitions of their Idolatrous Worſhip, and been enquiring after a better way of Religion; then indeed the Chriſtian Religion had appeared with great advantage, and would in all probability have been entertained with a readineſs

readineſs of Mind, proportionable to the reaſonableneſs of it. But this was not the caſe: when the Doctrine of the Goſpel was firſt publiſht in the world, the whole world, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were violently prejudiced againſt it, and fixt in their ſeveral Religions.

The *Jews* indeed in former times had been very prone to relinquiſh the Worſhip of the true God, and to fall into the Heathen Idolatry: but after God had puniſht them ſeverely for that ſin, by a long Captivity, they continued ever after, very ſtrict and firm to the Worſhip of the true God; and never were they more tenacious of their Religion and Law, than at that very time when our Saviour appeared in the world: And though *He* was foretold in their Law, and moſt particularly deſcribed, in the authentick Books of their Religion, the Prophets of the old Teſtament; yet by reaſon of certain groundleſs Traditions, which they had received from the Interpreters of their Law, that their *Meſſias* was to be a great Temporal Prince, they conceived an invincible Prejudice

againſt our Saviour, upon account of the Mean Circumſtances in which he appeared; and upon this Prejudice they rejected him, and put him to death, and perſecuted his Followers: And though their Religion was much nearer to the Chriſtian, than any of the Heathen Idolatries; yet upon this account, of our Saviours Mean Appearance, they were much more averſe to the Entertainment of it, than the groſſeſt Idolaters among the Nations.

Not but that *their* Prejudice alſo was very great; the common People being ſtrongly addicted to the Idolatry and Superſtitions of their ſeveral Countries; and the Wiſer, and more Learned (whom they call'd their *Philoſophers*) were ſo puft up, with a conceit of their own Knowledge and Eloquence, that they deſpiſed the rudeneſs and ſimplicity of the Apoſtles, and look'd upon their Doctrine of *a Crucified Saviour*, as ridiculous, and the ſtory of *his Reſurrection from the dead*, as abſurd and impoſſible. So St. *Paul* tells us, *that the Croſs of Chriſt was to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.*

But

But beſides the *Oppoſition* which the Goſpel met withal, from the Luſts and Prejudices of Men, the Powers of the World did likewiſe ſtrongly combine againſt it. Among the *Jews*, the Chief Prieſts and Rulers did, with all their force and malice, endeavour to ſtifle it in the birth, and to ſuppreſs it in its firſt riſe; and ſeveral of the *Roman* Emperors, who were then the great Governors of the World, engaged all their Authority, and their whole Strength, for the extirpation of it, and raiſed ſuch a ſtorm of Perſecution againſt it, as ſwept away greater numbers of Mankind, than any Famine or Plague or War that ever was in the *Roman* Empire: and yet this Religion bore up againſt all this *Oppoſition*, and made its way through all the Reſiſtance, that the Luſts and Prejudices of Men, armed with the Power and Authority of the whole World, could make againſt it. And this brings me to the

5. and laſt Conſideration I mentioned, the *great diſcouragment*, that

was given to the Entrance of this Religion.

There was nothing left to invite and engage men to it, but the Conſideration of *another World*; for all the Evils of *this World* threatned every one that took the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity upon him. Whoever was known to be a Chriſtian, was liable to Reproach and Ruin, to cruel Mockings and Scourgings, to Baniſhment or Impriſonment and Confiſcation of Eſtate; but theſe were ſlight and tolerable Evils, in compariſon of others that were commonly inflicted upon them; they were condemned to the Mines, and to the Lions, and all imaginable Cruelties were exerciſed upon them; the moſt exquiſite Torments that could be deviſed, and Death in all its fearful ſhapes was preſented to them, to deter Men from embracing this Religion, and to tempt them to quit it: and yet they perſiſted in the Profeſſion of their Religion, and for the ſake of it, did not only *take joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods*, but the moſt barbarous uſage of their *Perſons*, and demeaned themſelves not only with

with Patience and Courage, but with Exultation and Triumph, under thoſe Tortures, which no Man can hear or read of, without horror: And they did not only bear up thus manfully, for one brunt; but when theſe violent Perſecutions were renewed and repeated upon them, Chriſtianity ſupported it ſelf under all theſe daunting Diſcouragements, for almoſt three Hundred Years, and held out, till the very Malice of their Perſecutors was out of breath, and their Cruelty had tired it ſelf.

Nay it did not only *ſupport it ſelf*, under all theſe *Oppoſitions*, but *grew* and *proſpered*, and *the Blood of Martyrs became the Seed of the Church*, and Chriſtians ſprang up faſter, than any Perſecution could mow them down: For Men by Degrees became curious to enquire into the Cauſe of ſuch Sufferings, and the Reaſon of ſo much Conſtancy and Patience under them; and upon enquiry were ſatisfied, and became Chriſtians themſelves; and many times their very Perſecutors were ready to Sacrifice their Lives the next day, for that very Cauſe, for which

but the day before, they had put others to Death.

And it cannot here be reaſonably Objected, that Chriſtians yielded up themſelves to all theſe Sufferings, upon the ſame Account that ſome *brave Spirits* among the Heathen, laid down their Lives for their Country; namely, out of a deſire of Fame, and to perpetuate their Names in after Ages; this, I ſay, cannot reaſonably be ſaid in this caſe; becauſe theſe Sufferers, were not the great and ambitious Spirits, the flower and ſelect part of Mankind, but the Common People, and many of them of the tenderer Sex and Age, who have uſually a greater Senſe of Pain than of Glory; and yet ſo were they animated by their Religion, and Tranſported beyond themſelves, as not only to ſubmit, but many times to offer themſelves to thoſe Sufferings, by declaring themſelves to be Chriſtians, when no Man accuſed them, and when they knew they ſhould die, for making that Profeſſion; ſo that it is harder to juſtifie their forwardneſs to ſuffer, than the ſincerity of their Sufferings. Beſides,

that

that nothing could be more fooliſh and unreaſonable, than for Men to hope to get a Name by Suffering in a Crowd, and to be particularly remember'd to Poſterity, when they died in ſuch multitudes, that no Man knew the Names of the greateſt part of the Sufferers.

You ſee then how ſtrongly the Goſpel prevailed, how ſoon this new Religion over-ran the World, how ſuddenly it ſubdued the Spirits, and changed the Manners of Men; and by what *mean* and *deſpicable* Inſtruments, to all humane appearance, this *great* Work was done; and how in deſpite of all Oppoſition and Diſcouragements, it was carried on. Can any one of the falſe Religions of the World, pretend to have been propagated and eſtabliſht in ſuch a manner, merely by their own force, and the Evidence and Power of Truth upon the Minds of Men; and to have born up and ſuſtained themſelves ſo long under ſuch fierce Aſſaults, as Chriſtianity hath done?

As for the Religion of *Mahomet*, it is famouſly known to have been plant-

ed by force at firſt, and to have been maintained in the World, by the ſame violent means. So that great *Impoſtor* openly declares, *that he came not to plant his Religion by Miracles, but the Sword.*

And as for the Idolatries of *the Heathen*, they came in upon the World, by inſenſible degrees, and did not oppoſe the Corruptions of Men, but grew out of them; and being ſuited to the vicious Temper and Diſpoſition of Mankind, they eaſily gained upon their Ignorance and Superſtition, by Cuſtom and Example. They were juſt ſuch a Corruption of *Natural Religion*, in ſuch times of darkneſs and ignorance, and by ſuch inſenſible ſteps, as there hath been ſince, of the *Chriſtian Religion* in ſome parts of the World, which we all know. But no ſooner did the Light of the Goſpel ſhine out upon the World, but the Idolatry and Superſtition of the Heathen fell before it, like *Dagon before the Ark of God*; and tho' it had the Power of the World, and Countenance of Authority on its ſide, yet it was not able to maintain its ground;

ground; and no ſooner was that Prop taken away, which was the only ſupport of it, but it preſently ſunk and vaniſht; it was not driven out of the World by Violence and Perſecution, but upon the breaking in of ſo great a Light, it ſilently withdrew, as being aſhamed of it ſelf: And when afterwards the Emperor *Julian* endeavoured to retrieve it, by his Wit and Authority, and uſed all imaginable Arts and Stratagems, to ſuppreſs and extinguiſh Chriſtianity, he was able to effect neither; for the *Chriſtian Religion* kept its ground, and *Paganiſm*, after it had made a little blaze, died with him.

Now to what Cauſe ſhall we aſcribe this wonderful ſucceſs, and prevalency of the Goſpel in the World? There can but theſe two be imagined; the *Excellency* of the Chriſtian Religion, and the *Power and Preſence of the Divine Spirit* accompanying it.

1. The *Excellency* of the Chriſtian Religion; which both in reſpect of the goodneſs of its Precepts, and the aſſurance of its Rewards, hath plainly

ly the advantage of any Religion, that ever yet appeared in the World. And this is a great Advantage indeed: but by this alone it could never have been able to have broken through all that mighty *Oppoſition* and *Reſiſtance*, which was made againſt it; and therefore that it might be able to encounter this with ſucceſs,

2. God was pleaſed to accompany the firſt Preaching of it, with a mighty and ſenſible *Preſence and Power of his Spirit*. And this brings me to the

*Second* Part of the *Text*, the *Reaſon* of the *wonderful Efficacy* and *Succeſs*, which the Apoſtles had, in the Preaching of the Goſpel; *the Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with ſigns following*. Which words expreſs to us that Miraculous Power of the Holy Ghoſt, which accompanied the firſt Preaching of the Goſpel; by which I do not intend to exclude *the inward Operation* of Gods Holy Spirit upon the Minds of Men, ſecretly moving and enclining thoſe to whom the Goſpel was Preached, to embrace and entertain it; which the Scripture elſe-

where

where ſpeaks frequently of, and may poſſibly be intended in the *firſt* of theſe Expreſſions, *the Lord working with them*; and *the latter* may only be meant of *the miraculous Gifts* of the Spirit, with regard to which, God is ſaid to *confirm the Word with ſigns following*, or *accompanying* it. But I rather think they are *both* intended to expreſs the ſame thing, and that *the latter* is only added by way of explication of *the former*, to ſhew more particularly, how the Lord wrought with them; namely by giving Confirmation to their Doctrine, by thoſe miraculous Gifts and Powers of the Spirit, which they were endowed withal; *the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with ſigns following*; that is, with thoſe Miracles, which accompanied the firſt Preaching of the Goſpel. For theſe words do plainly refer to the Promiſe of the Spirit at the 17th verſe; *and theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe*; which is the Reaſon why they are here call'd *ſigns following*; that is, Miracles which accompanied the Word that was Preached.

And that this is the full meaning of

of this *Text*, will appear by comparing it with one or two more. *Rom.* 15. 18, 19. where St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of *the things which Chriſt had wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient to the Goſpel*, he ſays, *they were done through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the Power of the Spirit of God*; which is the ſame with that which is ſaid here in the *Text*, of *the Lords working with the Apoſtles, and confirming the Word, with ſigns following*. So likewiſe, *Heb.* 2. 3, 4. the Apoſtle there tells us, that *the Goſpel which was firſt ſpoken by the Lord, was confirmed by them that heard him, God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the holy Ghoſt*. So that the great Confirmation, which is ſaid here to be given to the Goſpel, was by *the Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit*, which were poured forth upon the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians.

In ſpeaking of which, I ſhall briefly do theſe *Two* things.

I. Give an account of the *Nature* of theſe Gifts, and of the *Uſe* and *End*

*End* to which they ſerved: And then ſhew in the

II. Place, how the Goſpel was *Confirmed* by them.

1. For the *Nature* of theſe Gifts, and the *Uſe* and *End* to which they were deſigned.

They are thoſe Miraculous Powers which by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the day of *Pentecoſt*, the Apoſtles were endowed withall, to qualifie them to Publiſh the Goſpel, with more ſpeed and ſucceſs. Such was the Gift of *ſpeaking divers Languages*, and the Gift of *interpreting* things ſpoken in divers Languages; (And theſe *two Gifts* were not neceſſarily united in the ſame Perſon, for the Apoſtle tells us, that ſome had the *one*, and ſome the *other*;) the Gift of *Prophecy* and *foretelling things to come*, which was always a ſign of a Perſon Divinely inſpired; the Miraculous Powers of *healing Diſeaſes*; of *Raiſing the Dead*, and of *Caſting out Devils*; a Power of *inflicting Corporal Diſeaſes, and Puniſhments*,

*Punishments*, upon scandalous and obstinate Christians, who would not submit to the Apostles Authority and Government; which is in Scripture call'd, *a delivering up to Satan, for the destruction*, or tormenting *of the Body, that the Soul may be saved*; nay in some cases, this Power extended to *the inflicting of Death it self*, as in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*.

Not that all these Miraculous Powers, were given to every one of the Apostles, or that they could exercise them at all times; some were bestowed upon one, and some upon another, according to Gods good pleasure, and as was most expedient for the *Use* and *Benefit* of the Church, and most subservient to those *Ends* for which God gave them; only we find that all the Apostles had the Gift of *Tongues*; and that the Power of *Casting out Devils, in the name of Christ*, was common to every Christian, and continued in the Church for a long time after the other Gifts were ceased; as *Tertul. Arnob.* and *Min. Felix* do testifie, even of their own times.

But

But, 2*ly*. I ſhall briefly ſhew how the Goſpel was *Confirmed* by theſe Miraculous Gifts.

Now beſides the particular *Uſes* and *Ends* of thoſe Miraculous Gifts, (as *the Gift of Tongues*, did evidently ſerve for the more ſpeedy Planting and Propagating of the Chriſtian Religion in the World; and the Power of *inflicting Corporal Puniſhments*, in a miraculous manner, upon Scandalous, and Diſobedient Chriſtians, did maintain the Power and Authority of the Apoſtles, and was inſtead of an ordinary Magiſtratical Power, which Chriſtians were deſtitute of, whilſt the *Roman* Empire continued Heathen;) I ſay beſides the particular *Ends* and *Uſes* of all theſe Miraculous Gifts, they did all in general, as they were *Miracles*, ſerve for the *Confirmation* of the Goſpel.

The Apoſtles delivered the Doctrine of Chriſt, and were *Witneſſes* of his Reſurrection from the dead, as *the great Miracle*, whereby his Doctrine was confirmed; now there was all

all the Reaſon in the World to believe *them*, to whom God was pleaſed to give ſuch a Teſtimony from Heaven; for who could make any doubt of the Truth of *Their* Teſtimony, concerning the Reſurrection of Chriſt, who were enabled *to raiſe others from the dead*, and by many other *wonderful things* which they did, gave ſuch clear Teſtimony, that *God was with them*?

Never had any Religion fewer worldly Advantages to recommend it, and ſo little temporal Countenance and Aſſiſtance to carry it on; but what it wanted from *Men*, it had from *God*; for *he gave witneſs to it with ſigns and wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*. God ſeems on purpoſe to have ſtript it of all Secular Advantages, that the Chriſtian Religion might be perfectly free from all ſuſpition of Worldly Intereſt and Deſign, and that it might not owe its Eſtabliſhment in the World, to the Wiſdom and Contrivance of *Men* but to the Arm and Power of *God*.

The *Inferences* I ſhall at preſent make

make from this Diſcourſe ſhall be theſe.

(1.) To give us Satisfaction of the Truth and Divinity of the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion, which hath had ſo eminent a Confirmation given to it from Heaven, and did at its firſt ſetting out ſo ſtrangely prevail in the World, againſt all Humane Probability; *not by might, nor by power; but by the ſpirit of the Lord.*

No man can well ſuppoſe a Religion in Circumſtances of greater Diſadvantage, and upon all Humane Accounts, more unlikely to ſuſtain and bear up it ſelf, than the Chriſtian Religion was. The firſt Appearance of it was ſo mean, and its Beginings ſo ſmall, that no Man but would have thought it would preſently have come to nothing; and no other account can be given of the ſtrange Succeſs and Prevalency of it, but that *it was of God*, and therefore *it could not be overthrown.*

(2.) This Diſcourſe may likewiſe ſatisfie us of the Reaſon why this Miraculous Power, which accompanied

the Goſpel at firſt, is now ceaſed; becauſe there is not the like Reaſon and Neceſſity for it, which there was at firſt.

It was highly Neceſſary *then*, to introduce the Chriſtian Religion into the World, and to be a ſenſible Evidence to Men, of the Divinity of that new Doctrine, which was preached to them: but *now* that the Goſpel is generally entertained, there is not the ſame Reaſon, why this Miraculous Power ſhould ſtill be continued. *Acquiſito fine, ceſſant media ad finem*, when the End is once obtained, the Means ceaſe; and the wiſe God, who is never wanting in what is *Neceſſary*, does not uſe to be laviſh in that which is *Superfluous*. Now that the Chriſtian Religion hath got firm footing in the World; God leaves it to be propagated and advanced, by its own Rational Force upon the Minds of Men: now that the Prejudices of Education in a Contrary Religion are removed, and the Powers of the World are reconciled to Chriſtianity; there is no need of ſuch violent and extraordinary Means for the continuance of

of it: now that it ſtands upon equal Advantages with other Religions; God hath left it to be carried on, in more humane and ordinary ways, and ſuch as are more level and accommodate to the Nature of Man.

That Miracles are long ſince ceaſed, is acknowledged by the Fathers, who lived an Age or two after the ceaſing of them; particularly by St. *Chryſoſtome*, who gives the ſame Reaſon for it, which I have juſt now aſſigned. But the Church of *Rome* would ſtill bear us in hand, that this Miraculous Power does ſtill continue in *their* Church, and according to *Bellarmine*, muſt always continue; becauſe he makes it *an inſeparable Property and Mark of the True Church.*

But *we* pretend to no ſuch Power, nor have we any Reaſon ſo to do; becauſe all the Doctrines of *our* Religion, are the *Ancient* Doctrines of Chriſtianity, delivered by our Saviour, and by his Apoſtles publiſht to the World; and theſe are ſufficiently confirmed already, by the Miracles which our Saviour and his Apoſtles wrought

in the Primitive Times of Chriſtianity. But the Church of *Rome* hath great Occaſion and Need of New Miracles, to confirm their *New* Doctrines; and therefore as they have Reaſon, they uſually apply them to the Confirmation of their *New* Doctrines; ſome to confirm *Purgatory*, and to give countenance to *Indulgences*; others to encourage *the Worſhip of the Bleſſed Virgin, and the Saints*; others to confirm that which all the Miracles in the World are not ſufficient to confirm, I mean the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*; which, becauſe it overthrows the certainty of *Senſe*, is in the Nature of it peculiarly incapable of being confirmed by a *Miracle*.

(3.) And *laſtly*, The Conſideration of what hath been ſaid does juſtly upbraid us, that this Religion, which was ſo powerful at firſt, and hath ſuch Characters of Divinity upon it, coming down to us confirmed by ſo many Miracles, ſhould yet have ſo little Effect upon moſt of us who call our ſelves Chriſtians.

*We* have all the Advantages of the Chriſtian

Chriſtian Religion, having been educated and brought up in it; and yet it hath leſs Effect upon *us*, than it had upon *thoſe* whoſe Minds were prejudiced, and whoſe Manners were depraved, by the Principles of a falſe Religion: for *thoſe* who were reduced from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity, did on the ſudden become better Men, and were more Holy and Virtuous in their Lives; than the greateſt part of *us*, who have been inſtructed and trained up all our lives in the Doctrine of Chriſtianity.

The true Reaſon of which is, that many of *us* are *Chriſtians*, upon the ſame account, that *they* were at firſt *Heathens*; *becauſe it was the Religion of their Country, and they were born and bred up in it*: but Chriſtianity was *the Religion of their Choice*, and there were no Motives to perſwade them to *the Profeſſion* of *that* Religion, but what were as powerful to oblige them to *the Practice* of it. Let *us* alſo be Chriſtians, not only by *Cuſtom*, but by *Choice*; and then *we* ſhall live according to our Religion.

He that takes up a Religion, for any other Reaſon, than to obey and practice it, does not *chooſe* a Religion, but only counterfeits the Choice of it. We have beyond Compariſon the beſt and moſt reaſonable Religion in the World, a Religion that hath the greateſt Evidence of its Truth, that contains the beſt Precepts, and gives men the greateſt Aſſurance of a future Happineſs, and directs them to the ſureſt Way of attaining it: Now the better our Religion is, the worſe are *we*, if we be not made good by it. The Philoſophy of the Heathen, made ſome virtuous; and there were many eminent Saints under the Imperfection of the Jewiſh Inſtitution. What Degrees then of Holineſs and Virtue may be expected from *us*, upon whom the Glorious Light of the Goſpel ſhineth ſo brightly?

I will conclude all, with the Words of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip. For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt,*

*ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward: How ſhall we eſcape; if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?*

A

# SERMON

Preached on the

## Feaſt of St. *Michael.*

HEB. I. 14.

*Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?*

THis is ſpoken of Good Angels, whoſe *Exiſtence*, as well as that of Evil Spirits, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament, do every where take for granted, no leſs than they do *the Being of God*, and *the Immortality of the Soul*. And well they may, ſince they

they are all founded upon the general Conſent of all Ages, derived down to us from the firſt Spring and Original of Mankind; of which general Conſent and Tradition, it is one of the hardeſt things in the world, to aſſign any good Reaſon, if the Things themſelves were not true. Therefore I ſhall not go about to force my way into this Argument concerning *the Exiſtence of Spirits, and Beings diſtinct from Matter*, by dint of diſpute, (which perhaps would neither be ſo proper, nor ſo profitable for this Aſſembly) but ſhall take the thing as I find it received by a general Conſent of Mankind. And ſo the Books of Divine Revelation do: Nor was there Reaſon to proceed in any other method, than to ſuppoſe theſe things, and take them for granted, as generally aſſented to by Mankind, without either aſſerting them for new Diſcoveries, or attempting to prove what was ſo univerſally believed. The Scriptures indeed have more particulaly declared *the Nature* of theſe Spirits, as alſo their *Order* and *Employment*; as in the words which I have read to you, where *the Office* and *Employment* of Good

Good Angels is more particularly discovered; *Are they not all* (says the Text) *ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

The Author of this Epistle to the *Hebrews* having had occasion, in comparing the *two Dispensations* of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, to speak of the *Angels*, by whose Ministry the Law was given, did not think fit to entertain those to whom he wrote, with any nice and curious Speculations (for School Divinity was not then in fashion) about the *Nature* and *Order* of Angels; but tells us, what it concerns us more to know, namely, what their *Office* and *Employment* is in regard to us. Concerning their *Nature*, he only tells us, that they are *Spirits*; as to their *Office* and *Employment*, he says in general, that they are *Ministring Spirits*, that is, that they stand before God to attend upon him, ready to receive his Commands, and to execute his Pleasure; more particularly, that they are upon occasion appointed and sent forth by God *to minister* on the behalf, and to do good Offices *for them that shall be heirs of salvation.*

Which

Which laſt words are a deſcription of pious and good Men, ſuch as had ſincerely embraced the Chriſtian Religion, and were thereby become the Children of God, and *Heirs of* Eternal *Salvation.* So that theſe words are a brief Summary of *the Doctrine* of *good Angels*, and of what the Scripture has thought fit to reveal to us concerning them: Which may be referred to theſe *Three* Heads.

*Firſt*, Their Nature; *are they not Spirits?*

*Secondly*, Their general Office and Employment; *are they not miniſtring Spirits?*

*Thirdly*, Their ſpecial Office and Employment, in regard to good Men; *they are ſent forth to miniſter for them* (that is, in their behalf, and for their benefit) *who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation.*

And this is as much as is neceſſary for us to know concerning them; and all this is very agreeable to the general Apprehenſion of Mankind; but the Scripture hath very much cleared and confirmed to us, that which was more obſcure

obſcure and leſs certain before. I ſhall briefly explain and illuſtrate theſe *Three* Heads, and then draw ſome uſeful Inferences from the whole.

*Firſt*, For their *Nature*; they are *Spirits*. This is univerſally agreed by all that acknowledge ſuch an Order of Beings, that they *are Spirits*: But whether they are pure Spirits, deveſted of Matter, and all kind of corporeal *Vehicle* (as the Philoſophers term it) hath been a great Controverſie, but I think of no great Moment and Conſequence. Not only the ancient Philoſophers, but ſome of the ancient Chriſtian Fathers, did believe Angels to be cloathed with ſome kind of Bodies, conſiſting of the pureſt and fineſt Matter; which they call *Ætherial*. And this Opinion ſeems to be grounded upon a pious Belief, that it is the peculiar Excellency and Prerogative of the Divine Nature, to be a pure and ſimple Spirit, wholly ſeparate from Matter: But the more currant Opinion of the Chriſtian Church (eſpecially of later times) hath been, that Angels are mere and pure Spirits, without any thing that is Material and Corporeal belong-

belonging to them; but yet ſo, that they have a Power to aſſume thin and airy Bodies, and can when they pleaſe appear in Humane Shape, as they are frequently in Scripture ſaid to have done. And this ſeems moſt agreeable to the Scripture Account of them; tho I think it is no *neceſſary Article of Faith*, either to believe that they are cloathed with ſome kind of Bodies, or that they are wholly deveſted of Matter.

But however this be, they are deſcribed in Scripture to be endowed with great Excellencies and Perfections; they are ſaid *to excel in ſtrength*, *Pſalm* 103. 20. and in *Knowledge* and *Wiſdome*. Hence are thoſe Expreſſions of *being as an Angel of God, to diſcern good and bad.* 2 Sam. 14. 17. *Wiſe, according to the wiſdom of an Angel*, v. 20. To be of great *Activity* and *Swiftneſs* in their Motions; hence it is that they are repreſented in Scripture, as *full of wings*: and to excel in *purity* and *holineſs*; hence is that Title given them in Scripture, of *the Holy Angels*. This is the Summ of what the Scripture hath in ſeveral places delivered to us, concerning the *Nature* and *Properties* of *good Angels*; and beyond this, all our Know-

Knowledge of them is mere Conjecture and Uncertainty; and the nice Speculations concerning them, idle and wanton Curioſities. Indeed the Scripture gives ſufficient intimation of ſeveral *Ranks* and *Orders* among them, by calling *Michael* an *Archangel*, and *Chief Prince*, and by diſtinguiſhing them by the names of *Principalities, and Powers, and Thrones, and Dominions*: but what the difference of theſe Names import, though ſome have attempted to explain, yet I do not find that they have diſcovered any thing to us, beſides their own Ignorance and Arrogance, in pretending to be *wiſe above what is written*; *intruding into thoſe things which they have not ſeen, being vainly puft up in their fleſhly minds*; as the Apoſtle cenſures ſome in his time.

*Secondly*, We have here their *general Office and Employment*; *they are miniſtring Spirits*; they are (as I may ſay) domeſtick Servants, and conſtant Attendants upon that great and glorious King, *whoſe Throne is in the Heavens, and whoſe Kingdom ruleth over all*; *they ſtand continually before him, to behold his face*, expecting his Commands, and

in

in a conſtant readineſs to do his Will. For tho the Omnipotence of God, and his perfect Power of acting be ſuch, that he can do all things immediately by himſelf, *whatever he pleaſeth in Heaven and in Earth*; can govern the World, and ſteer the Affairs of it, and turn them which way he thinks beſt, by the leaſt nod and beck of his Will, without any Inſtruments or Miniſters of his Pleaſure; yet his Wiſdom and Goodneſs has thought fit to honour his Creatures, eſpecially this higher and more perfect Rank of Beings, with his Commands, and to make them, according to their ſeveral Degrees and Capacities, the ordinary Miniſters of his Affairs, in the Rule and Government of this inferiour World; and this not for his own eaſe (for to Infinite Power nothing can be difficult or troubleſom) but for their happineſs; and he therefore employs them in his Work and Service, that they may be capable of his Favour and Rewards.

And that the Angels of God are the great Miniſters of his Providence here in the World, hath not only been the conſtant

conſtant Tradition of all Ages; but is very frequently and plainly aſſerted in Scripture. In the Old Teſtament we often read that God employed his Angels to be the Meſſengers of his Will and Pleaſure to Men; and to carry good Tidings and comfortable News to them upon ſeveral Occaſions: As to *Abraham*, to foretel the miraculous Birth of his Son *Iſaac*; and afterwards to reſcue him from being ſacrificed: To *Jacob*, when he was ſo afraid of his Brother *Eſau*: To *Manoah* and his Wife, to foretel the Birth of *Sampſon*, the great Deliverer of *Iſrael* from the *Philiſtines*: And upon that great Occaſion of bringing the People of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and conducting them through the Wilderneſs, he ſent a great and mighty Angel (called *the Angel of his Preſence*) to go before them, and guide them in their way: And the Apoſtle tells us, that *the Law was delivered to them upon Mount Sinai by the Diſpoſition of Angels.*

On the other hand, God frequently made them the Meſſengers of his Wrath, and Inſtruments of his Vengeance.

geance. Thus he ſent them to foretel, and to execute that terrible Deſtruction upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. And he ſent a Deſtroying Angel to brandiſh his Sword in a viſible manner over *Jeruſalem*, and to ſmite them with the Peſtilence, for *David*'s Sin in numbring the People. And by the Miniſtry of an Angel he ſlew in the Camp of the *Aſſyrians* in one Night, an hundred and eighty five thouſand. And, *Acts* 12. 23. it is ſaid, that *the Angel of the Lord ſmote Herod*, for receiving the blaſpemous Acclamations of the People.

Nay the Angels ſhall be the Inſtruments and Executioners of God's Vengeance upon the wicked, at the Judgement of the great Day. So the Judge himſelf tells us, *Matth.* 13. 49, 50. *So ſhall it be at the End of the World; the Angels ſhall come forth and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.*

And that particular Angels do preſide over Empires and Kingdoms, and ſway the weighty Affairs of them; and by

by a ſecret and inviſible Hand manage and bring about great Changes and Revolutions, both Jews and Chriſtians have collected with great Probability and Conſent from *Daniel* 10. where there is mention made of *the Prince of the Kingdom of Perſia withſtanding the Angel that was ſent to Daniel*, and of *Michael a Chief Prince aſſiſting him.* And of this Miniſtry of Angels, in the Government of Kingdoms, *Clemens Alexandrinus* ſpeaks, as of a thing out of all Controverſie. I proceed to the,

*Third* Thing, which I principally intended, and ſeems to be chiefly deſigned in the Text; and this is *the ſpecial Office and Employment* of good Angels, in regard to good Men; and for this the Apoſtle expreſly tells us, that *they are ſent forth to miniſter for them* (that is in their behalf, and for their benefit) *who ſhall be heirs of Salvation.* In which words there are *Three* things very conſiderable for our Inſtruction and Comfort.

1. Their particular *Deſignation* and *Appointment* for this Employment,

expreſt in theſe words, *ſent forth*, ἀποστελλόμενοι, as if they were particularly Commiſſioned and Appointed by God for this very End. God himſelf doth ſuperintend all Affairs, and by his particular Deſignation and Command, the Angels do *fulfil his Word*, and execute the Pleaſure of his good Will towards us. Hence it is ſo frequently ſaid in Scripture, that *God ſent his Angel* to ſuch or ſuch a Perſon, for ſuch or ſuch Purpoſes.

2. You have here the *general End* of their Employment; *for good Men*; they are ſent forth on our Behalf, and for our Benefit; to take Care of us and protect us, to ſuccour and comfort, to direct and aſſiſt, to reſcue and deliver us.

3. Here is the *more ſpecial End* of their Employment, in regard to good Men, intended in thoſe words; *for them who ſhall be heirs of Salvation*; Hereby ſignifying, that the Angels are employed about good Men, with Regard more particularly to their Eternal Happineſs, and for the Conducting and furthering of the great Affair

fair of their Everlaſting Salvation. This certainly is our greateſt Concernment; and therefore they have a more particular Charge and Care of us in Regard to this.

It was a common Opinion among the *Heathen*, and a conſtant and firmly believed Tradition among the *Jews*, (the *Sadducees* only excepted, who did not believe there was Angels or Spirits) that every Man (at leaſt every good Man) had *a Guardian Angel* appointed him by God, to take a ſpecial Care of him and his Concernments, both Spiritual and Temporal; to guard him from Dangers, to direct and proſper him in his Way, and to comfort and deliver him in his Affliction and Diſtreſs. And therefore we find among the *Jewiſh* Prayers, uſed by them at this day, a particular Prayer, wherein they requeſt of God, *to command the Angels who have the Care of Humane Affairs, to help and aſſiſt, to preſerve and deliver them.* But eſpecially they believed Good Angels, in their Attendance upon Good Men, to be very active and diligent to incline them to good, and to encourage them therein, by holy Motions and Suggeſtions, by

ſecret Comforts and Aſſiſtances, and by oppoſing Evil Spirits, and defending us againſt their Aſſaults, and by countermining their malicious Deſigns and Attempts upon us. And accordingly we find, that the beſt Men among the *Jews* did ſtedfaſtly believe, if not *the particular Guardianſhip* of Angels, and that every Good Man had *his particular Angel* aſſigned to him by God, to take the particular Charge of him; yet *the common Miniſtry* of good Angels, about good Men; and their more *eſpecial* care of *particular Perſons*, upon *particular and great Occaſions*, to protect them from Temporal Evils, and to promote and proſper their Temporal Affairs and Concernments.

Of this *Abraham the Father of the Faithful*, and *the Friend of God*, was moſt firmly perſwaded (at leaſt in Matters of great Moment and Concernment to us) as appears by his diſcourſe with his Steward, when he was ſending him to treat of a Match for his Son, *Gen.* 24. 40. *The Lord* (ſays he) *before whom I walk, will ſend his Angel with thee, and proſper thy way.* And *David* the *Man after God's own heart*, does more than

than once declare his confident Belief of the watchful Care and Miniſtry of Angels about good Men. *Pſal.* 34. and 7. *The Angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* And *Pſalm* 91. 11, 12. ſpeaking of the good Man, who putteth his Truſt and Confidence in God, he tells him for his Comfort and Security, that the holy Angels have a particular charge of him, to preſerve him from all the Miſchiefs and Dangers to which he is expoſed; *he ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.*

So that according to the Perſwaſion of thoſe two excellent Perſons, and of greateſt Renown for Piety in all the Old Teſtament, very much of the Safety and the Succeſs of good Men, even in their Temporal Concernments, is to be aſcrib'd to the vigilant Care and Protection of good Angels. And tho' this be ſeldom viſible and ſenſible to us, yet we have great Reaſon, upon ſo great Teſtimonies, to aſſent to the truth of it. And there is no Reaſon I think to doubt, but that God's Care

extends *now* to *Chriſtians*, as well as it did to the *Jews*; and that the Angels have as much Kindneſs for *us*, as they had for the *Jews*; and there is no Reaſon to think, that the Angels are *now* either dead or idle.

Our Saviour tells us, that they cannot dye; and our Reaſon tells us that a pure Spirit is an active Principle; and the Scripture repreſents Angels as all *flame* and *wings*. Evil Spirits are believed by *Chriſtians* to be as active *now*, to all purpoſes of harm and miſcheif, as ever: And why ſhould any Man imagine, that good Spirits are not as intent and buſie to do good? The Apoſtle (I am ſure) tells us in *the Text*, that the Angels in common, (all of them) do employ their Service about us, and wait to do good Offices to us; *are they not all* (ſays he) *miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*?

And our Saviour, *Matth.* 18. 10. ſeems to approve and confirm the Tradition of the *Jews*, concerning *particular Guardian Angels* belonging to every one that believed in him; that is, to every Chriſtian; *Take heed* (ſays he)

he) *that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven, their Angels always behold the face of my Father, which is in Heaven.* And this ſeems likewiſe to have been a received Opinion among the firſt *Chriſtians*; for we find, *Acts* 12. 15. that when *Peter* was miraculouſly releaſed out of Priſon by an Angel, and came to the houſe where the *Chriſtians* were aſſembled to pray for him, and one told them, *that* Peter *was at the door, they ſaid it was his Angel*; thinking that he himſelf was faſt in Priſon: For which ſaying there could be no Reaſon, had there not been a currant Opinion among them of *Guardian Angels.*

And becauſe the Providence of God is more peculiarly concerned, in conducting men to Eternal Happineſs; it is very credible, that God ſhould more eſpecially ordain the Miniſtry of Angels about good Men, for the furtherance of their Salvation. And ſo the Apoſtle tells us in the Text; *are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?* Nay our Saviour, in that remarkable place

place I mentioned before, *Matt.* 18. 10. ſeems to intimate, that Angels of *a higher Rank and Quality*, are aſſigned *Guardians* and *Guides* to thoſe that believed on him; *but I ſay unto you, that in Heaven, their Angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in Heaven:* An Alluſion to the manner of earthly Kings, upon whom not all their Servants, but *the Chief of their Nobility* do more immediately attend, and ſtand continually in their Preſence; for *to behold the face of the King*, and *to ſtand in his Preſence*, are Phraſes uſed in Scripture to ſignifie *immediate Attendance upon his Perſon.* So that by this manner of Expreſſion, our Saviour doth moſt ſignificantly intimate, in what Eſteem good Men are with God, whoſe Care and Protection he commits to *the Chief of the Angels*, to thoſe that are neareſt to him, and in higheſt Favour and Honour with him; as if he had ſaid, *their Angels* are not of the *ordinary Rank*, but ſuch as are admitted to *a more immediate Attendance* upon the great King and Governour of the World.

And

And no doubt it is for no mean End, that ſuch high and glorious Spirits are employ'd about us; it is chiefly for the furtherance of our Salvation; for the purchaſing whereof, the Son of God himſelf (*whom all the Angels of Heaven worſhip*) came down from Heaven, and appeared and ſuffered in our Nature, that we may one day *be made like to the Angels*, and dwell where they are, and may *continually behold the face of our Father which is in Heaven, as they do.* And in order to this End, it is very probable, that Good Angels are ready to do good Offices, juſt contrary to thoſe of Evil Spirits; that is, to employ their beſt Diligence and Endeavour for the Salvation of Men; and that they are very ſedulous and officious to reſtrain and pull them back from Sin, and to excite and ſolicite them to that which is good; and, in a word, to do all they can to help forward the Repentance and Converſion of Sinners. And this may reaſonably be collected from that Paſſage of our Saviour, *Luke* 15. 10. where he tells us, *That there is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner*

*Sinner that repenteth.* And if they be ſo glad of the Repentance of a Sinner; we may eaſily imagine how forward they are, to further and promote ſo good a work. And when Sinners are brought to Repentance; we have no Reaſon to doubt, but that the Angels are as ready to aſſiſt their Progreſs in Goodneſs.

It hath been a general, and I think not ill-grounded Opinion, both of the *Jews* and *Heathens*, that good Angels are more eſpecially preſent with us, and obſervant of us, and aſſiſtant to us, in the performance of all Acts of Religion; that they are particularly preſent at our Prayers; and therefore the *Jews* ſpeak of a particular Angel for this purpoſe, whom they call the *Angel of Prayer*; that they obſerve our Vows, and our breach or performance of them. So *Solomon* ſeems to intimate, *Eccleſ.* 5. 4, 6. *When thou voweſt a Vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleaſure in fools; pay that which thou haſt vowed. Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin*; that is, do not intangle thy life with a raſh Vow, which the frailty of Humane

mane Nature may make thee afterwards to break; *neither ſay thou before the Angel, that it was an errour*; that is, do not in the preſence of the Angel who attends upon thee, and obſerves thee, betray thine own error and raſhneſs. This I take to be the meaning of this difficult paſſage, *Let not thy mouth cauſe thy fleſh to ſin; neither ſay thou before the Angel that it was an errour.*

But the Angels are yet more particularly preſent, in the Places and at the Times of God's Publick Worſhip. The placing of *the Cherubims* in *the Holy of Holies*, ſeems to ſignifie the Preſence of the Angels in our moſt Religious Addreſſes to God. And *Plutarch* ſays, *that the Angels are the Overſeers of Divine Service.* And therefore we ought to behave our ſelves with all Modeſty, Reverence, and Decency in the Worſhip of God, out of regard to the Angels, who are there preſent, and obſerve our Carriage and Behaviour. And to this the Apoſtle plainly hath reſpect in that place, which by Interpreters hath been thought ſo difficult, 1 *Corinth.* 11. 10. where he ſays, *That,*

*That, for this Cauſe*, in the Aſſemblies of *Chriſtians* for the Worſhip of God, *the Woman ought to have a Vail upon her head*, in token of ſubjection to her Husband, *becauſe of the Angels*; that is, to be decently and modeſtly Attired in the Church, becauſe of the preſence of the holy Angels; before whom we ſhould compoſe our ſelves to the greateſt *external Gravity and Reverence*, which the Angels behold and obſerve, but cannot penetrate into the *inward Devotion* of our Minds, which God only can do; and therefore with regard to him who ſees our hearts, we ſhould more particularly compoſe our Minds, to the greateſt *Sincerity* and *Seriouſneſs* in our Devotion. Which I would to God we would all duly conſider, all the while we are exerciſed in the Worſhip of God, who chiefly regards our hearts. But we ought likewiſe to be very careful of our *external Behaviour*, with a particular regard to the Angels, who are preſent there, to ſee and obſerve *the outward Decency and Reverence* of our Carriage and Deportment: Of which we are very careful in the Preſence

ſence even of an Earthly Prince, when he either ſpeaks to us, or we make any Addreſs to him. And ſurely much more ought we to be ſo, when we are in the immediate Preſence of *God*, and of *his holy Angels*, every one of whom is a much greater Prince, and of greater Power, than any of the Princes of this World. But how little is this conſidered, (I ſpeak to our ſhame) and by how few among us!

And as Angels are helpful to good Men, in working out their Salvation, throughout the courſe of their lives; ſo at the hour of death, they ſtand by them, to comfort them and aſſiſt them in that needful and diſmal time, in that laſt and great Conflict of frail Mortality with Death and the Powers of Darkneſs; to receive their expiring Spirits into their Charge, and to conduct them ſafely into the Manſions of the Bleſſed. And to this purpoſe alſo the *Jews* had a Tradition; that the Angels wait upon good Men at their death, to convey their Souls into Paradiſe: Which is very much countenanc'd by our Saviour, in the Parable of *the rich man* and *Lazarus*, Luke 16. 22. where it is ſaid, *that when*

*when Lazarus died, he was carried by the Angels into Abraham's boſom.*

Nay, that the Angels have ſome Charge and Care of *the Bodies* of good Men after death, may not improbably be gathered from that Paſſage in St. *Jude*, v. 9. where *Michael* the *Archangel* is ſaid to have *contended with the Devil, about the Body of Moſes.* What the ground of this Controverſie betwixt them was, may be moſt probably explain'd, by a paſſage, *Deut.* 34. 6. where it is ſaid, *that God took particular care* (probably by an Angel) *concerning the burying of Moſes in a certain Valley*; and it is added, *but no man knoweth of his Sepulchre unto this day.* The Devil it ſeems had a fair Proſpect of laying a Foundation for Idolatry, in the Worſhip of *Moſes* after his death; if he could have gotten the diſpoſal of his Body, to have buried it in ſome known and publick place. And no doubt, it would have gratified him not a little, to have made *him*, who was ſo declared an Enemy to Idolatry all his life, an occaſion of it, after his death. But this God thought fit to prevent, in pity to the People of *Iſrael*, whom he ſaw upon all occaſions ſo prone

to

to Idolatry; and for that Reaſon committed it to the Charge of *Michael* the Archangel, to bury his Body ſecretly; and this was the thing which *Michael the Archangel contended with the Devil* about.

But before I paſs from this, I cannot but take notice of one memorable Circumſtance in this Conteſt, mentioned likewiſe by St. *Jude*, in theſe words, *yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he diſputed about the Body of Moſes, durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation.* His Duty reſtrain'd him from it, and probably his Diſcretion too: As he durſt not offend God, in doing a thing ſo much beneath the Dignity and Perfection of his Nature; ſo he could not but think, that the Devil would have been too hard for him at *railing*; a thing to which as the Angels have no diſpoſition, ſo I believe that they have no talent, no faculty at it. The cool Conſideration whereof ſhould make all Men, eſpecially thoſe who call themſelves *Divines*, and eſpecially in Controverſies about *Religion*, aſhamed and afraid of this manner of

diſputing; ſince *Michael the Archangel, even when he diſputed with the Devil, durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation.*

But to proceed. This we are ſure of, that the Angels ſhall be the great Miniſters and Inſtruments of the Reſurrection of our Bodies, and the reunion of them to our Souls. For ſo our Bleſſed Saviour has told us, *Matt.* 24. 30, 31. That *when the Son of man ſhall come in the clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory; he ſhall ſend his Angels to gather the Elect, from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.*

Thus I have as briefly as I could, and ſo far as the Scripture hath gone before us, to give us light in this matter, endeavoured to ſhew the ſeveral Ways wherein *good Angels do Miniſter in behalf of them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation.* All that now remains, is to draw ſome Inferences from this diſcourſe, and ſo I ſhall conclude.

*Firſt*, What hath been ſaid upon this Argument, and ſo abundantly proved from Scripture, may ſerve to eſtabliſh

eſtabliſh us in the Belief of this Truth, and to awaken us to a due Conſideration of it. That the Angels are inviſible to us, and that we are ſeldom ſenſible of their Preſence, and the good Offices they do us, is no ſufficient Reaſon againſt the Truth and Reality of the Thing; if by other Arguments we are convinced of it. For by the ſame Reaſon we may almoſt as well call in Queſtion the Exiſtence of God, and of our own Souls; neither of which do fall under the notice of our Senſes; and yet by other Arguments we are ſufficiently convinc'd of them both. So in this caſe, the general Conſent and Tradition of Mankind, concerning the Exiſtence of Angels, and their Miniſtry about us, eſpecially being confirmed to us, by clear and expreſs Teſtimony of holy Scripture, ought to be abundant Evidence to us; when we conſider that ſo general a Conſent muſt have a proportionable Cauſe; which can be no other, but a generneral Tradition grounded at firſt upon Revelation, and derived down to all ſucceeding Ages, from the firſt Spring and Original of Mankind; and ſince confirmed by manifold Revelations of

God, both in the Old and New Teſtament.

But yet I am ſenſible, that all this is no Conviction to the perverſe and contentious. Men will not believe even the Evidence of Senſe it ſelf, when they are ſtrongly prepoſſeſs'd and prejudiced to the contrary: For do we not ſee great numbers of Men, even ſo many as have the face to call themſelves the *Catholick Church*, that can make a ſhift, when they have a mind, either to believe or diſbelieve things contrary to the plaineſt Evidence of their Senſes. All that I ſhall ſay further about this matter, is, that this Doctrine of *Angels* is not a peculiar Doctrine either of the *Jewiſh* or *Chriſtian Religion*; but the general Doctrine of *all Religions* that ever were; and therefore cannot be objected againſt by any but the Atheiſts.

And yet after all, I know not whence it comes to paſs, that this great Truth, which is ſo comfortable to Mankind, is ſo very little conſidered by us. Perhaps the Corruption of ſo great a part of the Chriſtian

ſtian Church, in the point of *the Worſhip of Angels*, may have run us ſo far into the other extream, as ſcarcely to acknowledge any Benefit we receive by them. But ſurely we may believe they do us good, without any Obligation to pray to them; and may own them as the Miniſters of God's Providence, without making them the Objects of our Worſhip.

I confeſs it ſeems to me a very odd thing, that the Power of the Devil, and his Influence upon Men, and the particular Vigilancy and Activity of Evil Spirits to tempt us to Sin, ſhould be ſo readily owned, and ſo ſenſibly talkt of among Chriſtians; and yet the Aſſiſtance of good Angels ſhould be ſo little taken notice of, and conſidered by us. The Scripture ſpeaks plainly of both, and the Reaſons for believing both are equal: for God forbid but that good Angels ſhould be as officious and forward to do us good, as the Devil and his Angels are malicious and buſie to do us Miſchief. And indeed it would be very hard with Mankind, if we had not ſo much

to Hope for the Aſſiſtance and Protection of good Spirits, as we have cauſe to Fear the Malice and Fury of the bad. Good Angels are certainly as Powerful, and have as ſtrong a Propenſion and Inclination to do good, as the Devil hath to do harm; and the Number of good Angels is probably much greater, than of Evil Spirits. The biggeſt Numbers that are uſed in Scripture, are applied to good Angels. *Dan*, 7. 10. it is ſaid of *the Angels about God's Throne*, that *thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him.* And *Revelations* 5. 11. *the number of them* is ſaid to be, *ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands.* And the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, ch. 12.22. calls them *an innumerable company of Angels.*

What then ſhould be the Reaſon, that Men ſhould be ſo apt to own the Snares and Temptations, which the Devil lays before us, in all our ways; but take ſo little notice of the Attendance and good Offices, done to us by good Spirits? I can imagine but theſe *Two* Reaſons, and I am ſorry

ſorry I can find no better; That we are more mindful of Injuries than of Benefits: and are glad to take in others for the excuſe of our Faults; but are loth any ſhould come in for a ſhare in the Good that is done by us. And yet methinks it ſhould be a very comfortable Conſideration to us, againſt the Enmity and Cunning of the Devil and his Angels; that the Holy Angels of God are as Intent and Induſtrious to do us good, and to help forward our Salvation, as Evil Spirits can be to work our ruin, and deſtroy us.

*Secondly*, We ſhould with great thankfulneſs acknowledg the great Goodneſs of God to us, who takes ſuch Care of us, as to appoint his Angels, and to give them particular Commiſſion and Charge concerning us, to protect and aſſiſt us in all our ways, and eſpecially to promote the great Concernment of our Eternal Happineſs: And that not only ſome particular and inferiour Spirits, but the Chief Miniſters of this great King of the World, thoſe that *ſtand in his Preſence, and behold his face*; and

not a few of theſe, but the whole Order of them are employed about us. So the Apoſtle ſeems to ſay, by the Queſtion which he puts in the Text, *Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter?* That is, all, at one time or other. And though they be principally appointed to miniſter to us in order to our Salvation; yet we have no Reaſon to doubt, but God employs them many times for our Temporal Safety, and makes uſe of them more eſpecially in thoſe *great Revolutions*, in which his *Cauſe* and *Religion* are more immediately concern'd.

In ſuch a Caſe, it is not at all incredible, that God ſhould *give his Angels a particular Charge*, concerning thoſe that *fight his Battels*; *to pitch about their Camps*, and ſecretly to aſſiſt them againſt their Enemies, and to ward off, and put by many dangerous blows and thruſts, which are made at them; and wonderfully to preſerve them, when the Inſtruments of death fly about them, and do execution on every ſide of them. To what can we aſcribe *ſuch*

and

and *ſo many* remarkable Deliverances of *a Perſon upon whom ſo much depends*; but either to the immediate hand of God, or to the Miniſtry of Angels? And where God is provided ſo abundantly, with ſuch powerful Beings and Miniſters of his Will; though they be inviſible to us, yet there is great Reaſon to believe, that he very ſeldom works without them.

And now what an aſtoniſhing Regard is this, which the great God is pleaſed to have for the Sons of Men, that he ſhould make the whole Creation ſerviceable to us; not only the viſible Creation, for the ſupport of our Bodies, and the diverſion of our Minds; but even the nobleſt of all his Creatures, the great and glorious Inhabitants of the inviſible World, mightily ſurpaſſing us mortal Men, in the ſimplicity and purity of their Nature, in the quickneſs and largeneſs of their Underſtandings, and in their Power and Vigour of Acting; I ſay, that God ſhould give theſe excellent and glorious Beings the Charge over us, and ſend them forth to Miniſter to us, for the Safeguard of

of our Perſons, for the ſucceſs of our Affairs, and for the Security and Furtherance of our Eternal Salvation! *Lord, what is man that thou art* thus *mindful of him*; that when *thou madeſt him lower than the Angels*, thou ſhouldeſt yet *make the Angels to miniſter unto him*!

*Thirdly*, If the Angels have the particular Charge of good Men, we ſhould take heed how we deſpiſe, or be any way injurious to them: for how deſpicable ſoever they may appear to us, they are certainly very dear to God; ſince he deems them ſo conſiderable, as to employ his Chief Miniſters about them, and to commit the Charge of them to thoſe, who by their Office do more immediately attend upon himſelf. This is our Saviour's own Argument, *Matth.* 18. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, their Angels do continually behold the face of your Father, which is in Heaven.* With how much Contempt ſoever we may look upon *a poor good Man*; he hath Friends and Patrons of a higher

higher ſort, than any of the Princes of this World.

*Fourthly*, If God appointed Angels to be *Miniſtring Spirits on our behalf*; we may thence very reaſonably conclude, that God did not intend, that we ſhould *worſhip* them. This ſeems to be a clear Conſequence, if the Reaſoning of the Angel in the *Revelation* be good; where he forbids St. *John to worſhip him*; *becauſe he was his fellow ſervant*. Yea the Conſequence ſeems to be yet ſtronger from the Text; that if they be not only *Fellow Servants* but do in ſome ſort *miniſter unto us*; then we are not *to worſhip* them.

And yet this Practice is openly avowed in the Church of *Rome*; though it be reproved ſo very ſeverely by the Apoſtle, as an Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, *Coloſ.* 2. 18, 19. *Let no man* (ſays he) *deceive you, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels*; *not holding the head*; as if it were a Renouncing of Chriſt, out of a pretended Humility, to make uſe of other Mediators beſides him to the Father. And notwith-

notwithſtanding alſo that the Angel in the *Revelation* does ſo vehemently forbid it, Ὅρα μή, *by no means, upon no terms do it*; and he forbids it for ſuch a Reaſon, as makes it for ever unlawful; namely, that we ought not to worſhip thoſe, who ſerve and worſhip God together with us; *do it not, ſays the Angel, I am thy fellow ſervant; worſhip thou God.* In which words, he plainly directs us to the ſole and proper Object of our Worſhip.

*Bellarmine*, the great Champion of the Popiſh Cauſe, never uſed more groſs and apparent ſhuffling, than in Anſwer to this Text. He ſays *firſt, why are we reproved for doing what St.* John *did*? To which the Anſwer is very eaſie; becauſe St. *John* himſelf was reproved by an Angel, for doing what he did. And now that his Queſtion is anſwered, one might methinks ask him a croſs Queſtion or two. Why do the Church of *Rome* preſume to do that, which an Angel does ſo expreſly forbid to be done? Or was it fit for St. *John* to worſhip one, who (according to *Bellarmine*) was ſo ignorant

norant in the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, as to reprove him for doing his Duty? As is evident from his *Second* crafty Answer to this Text, *That* St. *John did well to give due Worship to the Angel*: And yet it is plain from this Text, that the Angel did not think the Worship which St. *John* gave to him, to be his due.

It is very hard to imagine, but that a Man of *Bellarmine*'s Understanding, did intend to give up the Cause, in his Answers to this Text: But if he was in earnest, then the Matter is brought to this plain and short issue; *Whether it be fitter for us to believe a Cardinal of Rome, or an Angel of God?*

*Lastly*, We should imitate the holy Angels, by endeavouring to serve God as they do, in ministring to the Good of others. Whilst we are in the Body, in this state of infirmity and imperfection; tho' we cannot serve God with the same Activity and Vigour that the blessed Angels do, yet we may in the same Sincerity, and with the same true Pleasure and Delight. And

And we ſhould learn alſo of them, to condeſcend to the meaneſt Services, for the good of others. If the Angels, who are no ways allied to us, and do ſo much excel us in the Dignity and Perfection of their Nature, (for tho' *David* ſays, that *God made man little lower than the Angels*; his meaning is, that he made him next below the Angels in the Rank of Beings; but yet very diſtant from them in Perfection) I ſay if thoſe glorious Creatures, who are *the Chief of the Ways* and Works *of God*, do not think much to humble themſelves to be Miniſters on our behalf; ſhall we be ſo proud, as to think much to ſtoop to the loweſt Offices, to ſerve one another?

You ſee, my Brethren, what is the conſtant Work and Employment of the Bleſſed Spirits above; to do good to Men, eſpecially in order to their Eternal Happineſs; and this is the higheſt degree of Charity, and Charity is the higheſt Perfection of Men and Angels: ſo that to employ our ſelves, with all our Minds, and with all our Might, to

to help forward the Salvation of others, is to be *Good Angels* (I had almoſt ſaid to be *a kind of Gods*) to Men.

I hope that we all of us do hope one day to be *like the Angels*, in the Purity and Perfection of their Nature. So our Saviour has told us, that *at the Reſurrection, we ſhall be like the Angels*: Now as they are the Patterns of our Hope and Happineſs; ſo let us make them the Examples of our Duty and Obedience; according as our Saviour hath taught us to pray, *that God's will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*; that is, that we may ſerve God, and do his Will here on Earth, (ſo far as the Infirmity of our Nature and of our preſent ſtate will admit) with the ſame Readineſs and Diligence, with the ſame Chearfulneſs and Zeal, that the holy and bleſſed Angels do in Heaven. And let us aſpire continually in our Minds, after that bleſſed Time, when we ſhall be free from Sin and Sorrow, from Affliction and Pain, from Diſeaſes and Death; when we ſhall ſerve God without Diſtraction, and do his Will without wearineſs, and ſhall

*be*

*be for ever with the Lord, amidſt an innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of juſt men made perfect.*

*Finally*, Let us bleſs God, as for all the viſible Effects of his merciful Providence towards us, ſo likewiſe for the inviſible Aids and Protection of his holy Angels; many times probably vouchſafed to us, when we are but little aware of it. But above all, let us bleſs him for his Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who *was made a little lower than the Angels*, that is, a Mortal Man; *that by the Suffering of death* for our ſakes, *he might be cloathed with glory and honour, according to the working of that mighty power which God wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all Principalities and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come. To him, O Father, with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, both now and for ever.* Amen.

A

# SERMON

Preached on

# St. *Luke*'s Day.

Pſal. CXII. 6.

The latter Part of the Verſe.

*The righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance.*

AS the Deſire and Hope of Immortality, which is implanted in Humane Nature, is ſome Evidence of the Thing; ſo likewiſe that Natural Deſire which is in Men, to have a Good Name perpetuated, and to be remembred, and mentio-

ned with honour, when they are dead and gone, is a ſign, that there is in Humane Nature ſome Preſage of a Life after Death; in which they hope, among other Rewards of well-doing, to meet with this alſo, to be well ſpoken of to Poſterity: And tho probably we ſhould not know the Good that is ſaid of us, when we are dead, yet it is an encouragement to Virtue, to be ſecured of it beforehand; and to find by Experience, that they who have done their part well in this life, go off with Applauſe; and that the Memory of their Good Actions is preſerved and tranſmited to Poſterity.

And among the many Advantages of Piety and Virtue, this is not altogether inconſiderable, that it reflects an Honour upon our Memory after death; which is a thing much more valuable, than to have our Bodies preſerved from Putrifaction: For *that* I think is the meaning of *Solomon*, when he prefers a Good Name before precious Oyntment, *Eccl.* 7. 1. *A good name is better than precious Oyntment. This* they uſed in Embalming

ing of dead Bodies, to preſerve them from noiſomneſs and corruption: but *a Good Name* preſerves a Man's Memory, and makes it grateful to Poſterity; which is a far greater Benefit, than that of *a precious Oyntment* which ſerves only to keep a dead Body from ſtench and rottenneſs.

I ſhall briefly explain the words, and then conſider the matter contained in them; *the righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance.* By the *righteous* is probably here meant *the good man* in general; for tho' Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, are in Scripture frequently uſed for that particular Virtue, whereby a Man is diſpoſed to render to every Man his own; which is known by the name of *Juſtice*; yet it is leſs frequently, and perhaps in this place, uſed in a larger ſenſe, ſo as to comprehend all *Piety* and *Virtue.* For ſo *the righteous man* is deſcribed at the beginning of this *Pſalm*, *Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his Commandments*: And he is oppoſed to *the wicked man*, v. 10. *the wicked ſhall ſee it, and be grieved*; that is, he ſhall be

troubled to ſee the Proſperity of *the righteous*; the manifold Bleſſings of his life, and the Good Name he ſhall leave behind him at his death; which is the meaning of *his being in everlaſting remembrance*; that is, long after he is dead, perhaps for many Ages, he ſhall be well ſpoken of, and his Name mentioned with honour, and his Good Deeds recorded and remembred to all Poſterity.

So that the ſenſe of the words amounts to this, *That eminently good men, do commonly leave a Good Name behind them, and tranſmit a grateful Memory of themſelves to after Ages.* I ſay *commonly*, for ſo we are to underſtand theſe kind of ſayings; not that they are ſtrictly, and univerſally true, without exception; but uſually, and for the moſt part. It is poſſible, that a Good Man may ſoon be forgotten, by the Malice of Men; or through the partiality and iniquity of the Age, may have his Name blemiſht after death, and be miſ-repreſented to Poſterity: but *for the moſt part* it is otherwiſe; and tho' the World be very wicked, yet it ſeldom deals ſo hardly and unjuſtly with

with Men of eminent Goodneſs and Virtue, as to defraud them of their due Praiſe and Commendation after death. It very frequently happens otherwiſe to Good Men, whilſt they are alive; nay they are then very ſeldom ſo juſtly treated, as to be generally eſteemed and well ſpoken of, and to be allowed their due Praiſe and Reputation: But after death, their Good Name is generally ſecured and vindicated, and Poſterity does them that right, which perhaps the Age wherein they lived denyed to them. Therefore in the Proſecution of this Argument, I ſhall enquire into theſe *Two* things.

*Firſt*, Whence it comes to paſs, that Good Men are very often defrauded of their juſt Praiſe and Reputation, whilſt they are alive? And,

*Secondly*, What Security they have of a Good Name after death?

*Firſt*, Whence it comes to paſs, that Good men are ſo frequently defrauded of their juſt Praiſe and Reputa-

tion, while they are alive? And to give our ſelves full ſatisfaction in this matter, *Two* things are fit to be enquired into.

1. From what Cauſe this proceeds?

2. For what Reaſon the Providence of God doth often permit it?

(1.) From what Cauſe it proceeds, that good Men have ſo often the hard Fate to be ill ſpoken of, and to be ſeverely cenſur'd, and to have their worth much detracted from, while they are alive?

And this proceeds partly from Good Men themſelves; and partly from others.

1. Good Men themſelves, are many times the cauſe of it. For the beſt Men are imperfect; and preſent and viſible Imperfections do very much leſſen, and abate the Reputation of a Man's Goodneſs. It cannot be otherwiſe, but that the luſtre of a great Piety and Virtue ſhould be ſon[illegible]what
cl[illegible]ed,

obſcured, by that mixture of Humane Frailty, which does neceſſarily attend this ſtate of Imperfection: And though a Man by great Care and Conſideration, by great Vigilancy and Pains with himſelf, be arrived to that degree and pitch of Goodneſs, as to have but a very few viſible Failings, and thoſe ſmall, in compariſon; yet when theſe come to be ſcann'd and commented upon, by Envy or Ill-will, they will be ſtrangely inflamed and magnified, and made much greater, and more than in truth they are. But there are few Perſons in the world, of that excellent Goodneſs, but beſides the common and more pardonable Frailties of Humanity, they do now and then diſcover ſomething, which might perhaps juſtly deſerve a ſevere Cenſure, if ſome amends were not made for it, by many and great Virtues.

Very good Men are ſubject to conſiderable Imprudences, and ſudden Paſſions; and eſpecially to an affected Severity and Moroſeneſs of Carriage; which is very diſguſtful, and apt to beget diſlike. And they are the more incident to theſe kind of Imperfecti-

ons; becauſe out of a juſt hatred of the vicious Cuſtoms and Practices of the World, and to keep out of the way of Temptation, they think it ſafeſt to retire from the world as much as they can; being loth to venture themſelves, more than needs, in ſo infectious an Air. By this means, their Spirits are apt to be a little ſower, and they muſt neceſſarily be ignorant of many points of Civility, and good Humour; which are great *Ornaments* of Virtue, though not of the *Eſſence* of it.

Now two or three Faults in a Good Man, if an Uncharitable Man have but the handling and managing of them, may eaſily caſt a conſiderable Blemiſh upon his Reputation; becauſe the better the Man is, ſo much the more conſpicuous are his Faults; as Spots are ſooneſt diſcovered, and moſt taken notice of, in a pure and white Garment. Beſides that, in matters of Cenſure, Mankind do much encline to the harder ſide; and but very few Perſons are ſo charitable and equal, as to conſtrue things to the beſt ſenſe, and to conſider a Man all together;

together; and fairly to ſet the Good that is in him, againſt his Faults and Imperfections. But,

2. Though Good Men many times contribute too much, to the leſſening of their own Reputation, with thoſe among whom they live; yet the principal Cauſe of their Suffering in this kind, is not from themſelves, but others; and that upon theſe *Three* Accounts.

1. From the Hatred and Oppoſition of Bad Men to Holineſs and Virtue; and theſe are commonly the greateſt number, and make the loudeſt crie. They are declared Enemies to *Goodneſs*; and then how can it be expected, they ſhould have any great Kindneſs for *Good Men*? They want Virtue themſelves; and therefore they think themſelves upbraided by the Good Qualities of others.

This Enmity of Wicked Men againſt the Righteous, and the true Reaſon of it, is very well expreſt, in the *Wiſdom* of *Solomon*, ch. 2. v. 12. *Let us* (ſay they) *lie in wait for the Righteous*;

*Righteous; becauſe he is not for our turn, and is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and he objecteth to our Infamy, the ſins of our youth; he was made to reprove our Thoughts, therefore he is grievous unto us, even to behold; for his life is not like other men, he is quite of another faſhion; we are eſteemed of him as reprobate Silver, he abſtaineth from our ways, as from filthineſs.* This is that which filleth the Minds of wicked Men with Malice againſt the Righteous; and Malice will eaſily invent ways to blaſt any Man's Reputation. Good Men do ſometimes, as it is their duty, reprove thoſe that are bad; or if they do it not in Word, yet they upbraid them in their Actions, and contrary courſe of life; and both theſe are grievous and provoking to them. Not but that Wicked Men are many times in their Conſciences convinced of the real Goodneſs of thoſe whom they ſpeak againſt; but they will not own it, leſt in ſo doing they ſhould condemn themſelves.

2. Another Cauſe of this, is the Envy of thoſe, who perhaps have ſome degree

degree of Goodneſs themſelves. For great Virtue is apt to raiſe Envy in thoſe who fall ſhort of it; and this makes thoſe who are but imperfectly Good, to detract from the Eminent Worth of others; becauſe they are ſenſible, they are outſhined by them, and that it occaſions a diſadvantagious Compariſon, and makes their Defects taken notice of.

They can endure a Man that is moderately Good, and keeps pace with his Neighbours: But if he endeavour to outſtrip them, they preſently combine againſt him, and take all oportunities to undermine his Reputation; and will be very glad, either *to find* a blot in his Eſcutcheon, or *to fix* one there.

3. There is ſomething in the very Preſence and Nearneſs of Goodneſs and Virtue, which is apt to leſſen it.

In matters of *Senſe*, the nearer the Object is, the bigger it appears; and the farther diſtant it is from us, the leſs it ſeems to be: But *here* it is quite otherwiſe; Men are not ſo apt to

to value Preſent Worth, when yet they will reverence it mightly at a Diſtance.

I know not whence it comes to paſs, but ſo we certainly find it; that Men are more ſenſible of the Goodneſs and Excellency of any thing, under the want of it, than while they enjoy it; and do uſually value it more when it is gone, than they did whilſt it was preſent with them. Whilſt we live with Good Men, and converſe with them every day, we take but little notice of them; but no ſooner are they departed, but we admire them, and every Man's Mouth is open to celebrate their Good Qualities. Perhaps Familiarity, and Acquaintance, and Converſation does inſenſibly beget ſomething of Contempt; but whatever the Reaſon of it be, we find the Thing moſt certainly true in Experience.

(2.) Let us conſider in the next place, for what Reaſons the Providence of God permits it thus to be? I ſhall mention but theſe *Two*.

1. To

1. To keep Good Men humble, and, as the expreſſion is in *Job*, *to hide pride from Men.*

God's Providence, in the diſpoſal and ordering of things in this World, ſeems rather to conſult our Safety, than our Satisfaction; and the Security of our Virtue, than the full Reward of it. Now if Good Men ſhould always meet with that clear Eſteem and Reputation, which their Goodneſs deſerves, they would be in great danger of being puft up with a proud Conceit of themſelves; and Pride is enough to ſupplant the greateſt Virtue in the World; ſuch *a dead fly*, as this, were ſufficient *to ſpoil a Box of the moſt precious Oyntment.* For Man is an ambitious Creature, and *vain* above all things; ſo *vain*, as not only to be covetous of Praiſe, but even patient of Flattery; and the beſt of Men lie too open, on this blind ſide of Humane Nature; and therefore God, *who knows our frame*, and how apt duſt and aſhes are to be proud, hath in his wiſe and merciful Providence ſo diſpoſed things, that good Men are ſeldom expoſed

to

to the full force of ſo ſtrong a Temptation. And for this Reaſon, he lets looſe envious and malicious Tongues, to detract from Good Men, for a check to the Vanity of Humane Nature, and to keep their Virtue ſafe, under the protection of Humility.

And this is the way likewiſe to ſecure the Reputation which they have, and which otherwiſe would be in danger of being loſt: For he that is once proud of the Eſteem he hath got, takes the readieſt way to fall into Contempt; and certainly it is better of the two, that our Reputation ſhould ſuffer a little, by the Malice of others; than be ruin'd by our own Pride and Vanity.

God does not envy Good Men, the Reputation of their Goodneſs and Virtue; but he knows the weakneſs of Humane Nature, and *will not ſuffer it to be tempted, above what it is able.* When Good Men are grown up to Perfection, and able to bear it, as they will be when they come to Heaven, their Good Name ſhall be fully vindicated, and they ſhall have Praiſe,

Praiſe, not only from Men, but from Angels, and from God himſelf.

2. This life is not the proper Seaſon of Reward, but of Work and Service.

In this life, God is pleaſed to give ſome preſent encouragement to Piety and Virtue, but reſerves the main of our Recompence, to be beſtowed upon us at the end of our Work. When our *Courſe is finiſhed*, then, and not before, we muſt expect our *Crown*; when our Accounts are caſt up, and ſtated, and it appears what improvement we have made of our Talents, then will come, the *Euge bone ſerve, Well done good and faithful Servant*. In the mean time, Good Men muſt be content with ſuch a portion of Eſteem, as an envious and ill-natured World will afford them.

And thus I have done with the *Firſt* thing I propoſed to enquire into; Whence it comes to paſs, that Good Men are frequently defrauded of their due Praiſe and Reputation, while alive? I proceed to the

*Second*

*Second* Enquiry, namely, what Security Good Men have of a Good Name after death?

And the true Account of this is to be given, partly from the *Providence of God*, and partly from the *Nature of the Thing*.

(1.) From the *Providence of God*; which is concerned herein, upon a *twofold* account.

1. In reſpect of the *Equity* of it.

2. In regard of the *Example* of it.

1. In reſpect of the *Equity* of it. God, who will not be behind-hand with any Man, concerns himſelf, to ſecure to Good Men the proper Reward of their Piety and Virtue. Now Praiſe is one of the moſt proper Recompences of good and virtuous Actions; this Good Men ſeldom meet with in this life, without a great deal of allay and abatement; and therefore the Providence of God hath ſo ordered things,

things, that it ſhould come in the propereſt Seaſon, when our Work is done, and when we are out of the Danger of the Temptation of it.

2. In regard of the *Example* of it. It is a great Argument to Virtue, and an encouragement to Men, to act their Part well, to ſee Good Men applauded, when they go off the ſtage. Every Man that hath any ſpark of Generoſity in him, is deſirous of Fame; and tho' Men care not how ſoon it comes, yet they will be glad to have it after death, rather than not at all. Piety and Virtue would be but very melancholy and uncomfortable things; if they ſhould always be ſo unfortunate, as never to meet with due Eſteem and Approbation: but when Men are aſſured, that they ſhall have this Reward, one time or other, and obſerve it to be ſo in experience; this is a great Spur and encouragement to do virtuouſly: And a great Mind, that hath a juſt ſenſe of Reputation and a good Name, will be content to lay in for it beforehand; and patiently to wait the time, which God

knows fitteſt for the beſtowing of it.

(2.) The other part of the Account of this Truth, is to be given from the *Nature of the Thing*: Becauſe Death removes and takes away the chief Obſtacle of a Good Man's Reputation. For then his Defects are out of ſight, and Men are contented that his Imperfections ſhould be buried in his grave with him. Death hath put him out of the reach of Malice and Envy, his Worth and Excellency does now no longer ſtand in other mens light; his great Virtues are at a diſtance, and not ſo apt to be brought into Compariſon, to the prejudice and diſadvantage of the living; *mortui non mordent*; The Example of the dead, is not ſo cutting a reproof to the Vice of the living; the Good Man is removed out of the way, and his Example, how bright ſoever, is not ſo ſcorching and troubleſom at a diſtance; and therefore men are generally contented, to give him his due Character.

Beſides that there is a certain Civility

vility in Humane Nature, which will not ſuffer men to wrong the dead, and to deny them the juſt commendation of their worth. Even the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, (as bad a ſort of Men as we can well imagine) though they were juſt like their Fathers in perſecuting and ſlaying the Prophets, while they were alive; yet had they a mighty Veneration for their Piety and Virtue, after they were dead, and thought no Honour too great to be done to them. They would be at the Charge of raiſing Monuments to the Memory of thoſe Good Men, whom their Fathers had ſlain; and whom they would certainly have uſed in the very ſame manner, had they either lived in the days of thoſe Prophets, or thoſe Prophets had lived in their days, as our Saviour plainly told them.

All that now remains is, to draw ſome *Inferences* from what hath been ſaid, by way of Application; and they ſhall be theſe *Three*.

1. To vindicate the Honour and

Reſpect which the Chriſtian Church, for many Ages, hath paid to the Memory of *the firſt Teachers and Martyrs* of our Religion.

2. To encourage us to Piety and Goodneſs, from this Conſideration; that *the righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance.*

3. That when we pretend to honour the Memory of Good Men, we would be careful to imitate their Holineſs and Virtue.

1. To vindicate the Honour, which the Chriſtian Church hath for many Ages done to *the firſt Teachers and Martyrs* of our Religion; I mean more eſpecially to *the holy Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour; to whoſe Honour, the Chriſtian Church hath thought fit to ſet apart Solemn Times, for the Commemoration of their Piety and Sufferings, and to ſtir up others to the imitation of them.

This certainly can with no good colour, either from Scripture or Reaſon,

ſon, be pretended to be unlawful; and when *David* here ſays, *the righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance*; he cannot certainly be thought to exclude the moſt ſolemn Way of commemorating their Piety and Virtue.

I do not pretend, this Cuſtom can be derived from the very firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; but ſurely it is ſufficient, for the lawfulneſs of it, that it is no where forbidden; nay it is rather required here in the Text; the beſt way to preſerve the Memory of Good Men, being thus to commemorate them. And it may be of great Uſe to us, if it be not our own fault; the ſetting before our eyes, the holy lives of Excellent Men, being in its own nature apt to excite us to the Imitation of them.

Beſides that I could tell you, that though this cannot be proved ſo ancient, as ſome vainly pretend; yet it is of great Antiquity in the Church, and did begin in ſome of the beſt Ages of Chriſtianity. *Memoræ Mar-*

*tyrum, the Meetings of Chriſtians at the Tombs of the Martyrs* was practiſed long before the degeneracy of the *Weſtern* Church; and Chriſtians were wont at thoſe Meetings, ſolemnly to commemorate the Faith and Conſtancy of thoſe Good Men, and to encourage themſelves from their Examples.

I know very well, that this did in time degenerate into groſs Superſtition, which afterward gave colour and occaſion to that groſs and Idolatrous Practice in the Church of *Rome*, of *Worſhipping Saints*. But this Abuſe is no ſufficient Reaſon for us, to give over the Celebrating of the Memory of ſuch holy Men, as *the Apoſtles* and *Martyrs* of Chriſt were; and propounding them to our ſelves for our Patterns. We may ſtill lawfully give *them their due Honour*; tho' the Church of *Rome* hath ſo over-done it, as to rob *God* of *his*.

2. Let this Conſideration, that *the righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance*, be an encouragement to us, to Piety and Goodneſs. This to a generous

generous Nature, that is ſenſible of Honour and Reputation, is no ſmall Reward and Encouragement. Before the Happineſs of Heaven was clearly revealed, and *life and immortality brought to light, by the Goſpel*, one of the greateſt Motives to worthy and virtuous Deeds, was the earneſt deſire which Men had of leaving a Good Name behind them, and of perpetuating the Fame and Glory of their Actions to after Ages. Upon this ground, chiefly, many of the Braveſt Spirits, among the Heathen, were animated to Virtue, and, with the hazard of their lives, to do great and glorious Exploits for their Country.

And certainly, it is an Argument of a great Mind, to be moved by this Conſideration; and a ſign of a low and baſe Spirit, to neglect it. He that hath no regard to his Fame, is loſt to all purpoſes of Virtue and Goodneſs; when a Man is once come to this, not to care what *others ſay* of him, the next ſtep is, to have no care what *himſelf does*. *Quod conſcientia eſt apud Deum, id fama eſt apud homines*, what

Conſcience is in reſpect of God, that is Fame in reſpect of Men. Next to a good Conſcience, a clear Reputation ought to be to every Man the deareſt thing in the World. Men have generally a great value for Riches; and yet the Scripture pronounceth *him* the happier Man, that leaves a Good Name, than *him* that leaves a great Eſtate behind him, Prov. 22. 1. *A good name is rather to be choſen, than great riches.*

If then we have any regard to a Good Name; the beſt way to ſecure it to our ſelves, is by the holy and virtuous Actions of a good life. Do well, and thou ſhalt be well ſpoken of; if not now, yet by thoſe who ſhall come after; the ſureſt way to *glory, and honour, and immortality*, is *by a patient continuance in well-doing*. God hath ingaged his promiſe to us to this purpoſe, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed. The name of the wicked ſhall rot*, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. 10. 7. But God doth uſually take a particular care,

to

to preſerve and vindicate *their* Memory, who are careful to *keep his Covenant, and remember his Commandments to do them.*

3*dly*, and *laſtly*, When ever we pretend to do honour to the Memory of Good Men, let us charge our ſelves with a ſtrict Imitation of their Holineſs and Virtue. The greateſt honour we can do to God, or Good Men, is to endeavour to be like them; to expreſs their Virtues, and repreſent them to the World in our lives. Upon *theſe Days*, we ſhould propound to our ſelves, as our Patterns, all thoſe holy and excellent Perſons, who have gone before us; *the Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour, and all thoſe bleſſed *Saints* and *Martyrs*, *who were faithful to the death, and have received a crown of life and immortality.*

We ſhould repreſent to our ſelves the Piety of their Actions, and the Patience and Conſtancy of their Sufferings, that we may imitate their Virtues, and *be followers of them, who through faith and patience, have inherited the promiſes; and ſeeing we are compaſt*

*paſt about with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes,* we ſhould *lay aſide every weight, and run with patience the race which is ſet before us.*

Let us imagine all thoſe great Examples of Piety and Virtue, ſtanding about us in a throng, and fixing their Eyes upon us. How ought we to demean our ſelves in ſuch a Preſence, and under the eye of ſuch witneſſes! and how ſhould we be aſhamed to do any thing, that is unworthy of ſuch excellent Patterns, and bluſh to look upon *our own* lives, when we remember *theirs*! Good God! at what a diſtance do the greateſt part of Chriſtians follow thoſe Examples! and while we honour them with our *lips*, how unlike are we to them in our *lives*!

Why do we thus reproach our ſelves with theſe glorious Patterns? Let us either reſolve to imitate their Virtues, or to make no mention of their Names; for while we celebrate the Examples of *Saints* and *Holy Men*, and yet contradict

dict them in our lives, we either *mock them*, or *upbraid our ſelves. Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

A

# SERMON

Preached on

## All-Saints Day, 1684.

### HEB. XIII. 7.

The latter Part of the Verſe.

*Whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.*

The whole Verſe runs thus,

*Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God; whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.*

THe great Scope and Deſign of this Epiſtle, is to perſwade the *Jews*, who were newly converted

converted to *Chriſtianity*, to continue ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion of it, notwithſtanding all the Sufferings and Perſecutions it was attended withall; and to encourage them hereto, among many other Arguments which the Apoſtle makes uſe of, he doth ſeveral times, in this Epiſtle, propound to them the Examples and Patterns of Saints and Holy Men, that were gone before them; eſpecially thoſe of their own Nation, who in their reſpective Ages had given remarkable Teſtimony of their Faith in God, and conſtant Adherance to the Truth. Ch. 6. 11, 12. *And we deſire, that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope, unto the end: that ye be not ſlothful; but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.* And, ch. 11. he gives a Catalogue of the eminent Heroes and Saints of the Old Teſtament, who *by Faith* had done ſuch Wonders, and given ſuch Teſtimony of their Patience and Conſtancy, in doing and ſuffering the Will of God; from whence he infers, ch. 12. 1. that we ought to take Pattern and Heart from ſuch Examples, to perſevere in our

our Chriſtian courſe; *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of* Martyrs, or *Witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us*; eſpecially ſince they had greater Examples than theſe, nearer to them, and more freſh in memory; the great Example of our Lord, the Founder of our Religion; and of the firſt Teachers of Chriſtianity, the Diciples and Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour. The Example of our Lord himſelf, the Captain and Rewarder of our Faith, v. 2. of that 12. ch. *Looking unto the author and finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*; v. 3. *For conſider him, who endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.* This indeed is *the great Pattern* of Chriſtians, and, in regard of the great Perfection of it, ſurpaſſeth all other Patterns, and ſeems to make them uſeleſs; as having in it the Perfection of the Divinity, not in its full brightneſs, (which would be apt to dazle rather than direct us) but allayed

allayed and ſhadowed with the Infirmities of Humane Nature; and for that Reaſon, more accommodate and familiar to us, than the Divine Perfections abſtractedly conſidered.

But yet becauſe our Bleſſed Saviour was *God* as well as *Man*, and clear of all ſtain of ſin, (for tho' he was cloathed with the Infirmities, yet he was free from the Corruption of Humane Nature) therefore the Examples of *meer Men*, liable to ſin as we are, may in many reſpects be more ſuitable and accommodate, to encourage us to the imitation of thoſe Virtues, which are attainable by [redacted] this ſtate of Imperfection; for which Reaſon the Apoſtle hath thought fit likewiſe to propoſe to us, the higheſt Examples of that kind, *the firſt Teachers of our Religion*; for of theſe he ſeems to ſpeak here in the *Text*, namely thoſe *Apoſtles*, or *Apoſtolical Men*, by whom they had been inſtructed in the Faith of Chriſt, but who were now departed this life; it being very probable, that the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſuch as were dead, when he ſays, *Remember them, which have the rule over you*, (or,

(or, thoſe that have been your Guides) *who have ſpoken to you the word of God, whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.*

I ſay this is very probable, becauſe he minds them to *remember* them, which ſuppoſeth them to be abſent; but eſpecially, becauſe he minds them, *to conſider the end of their converſation*; by which ſurely he means the Bleſſed State of thoſe Good Men after death; which is elſewhere called, *the end of our faith, even the ſalvation of our ſouls*, 1. Pet. 1. 9. So likewiſe, Rom. 6. 22. this is ſaid to be the *End* of a holy life; *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the End, everlaſting life.* And it very much favours this Interpretation, that the Apoſtle afterwards ſpeaks of the living Guides, and Governours of the Church, v. 17. *Obey them which have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves; for they watch for your ſouls.*

So that it is highly probable, that the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſuch Guides, and Governours of the Church, as had once been over them, but were now departed this life; and therefore he

might, with more freedom, and leſs envy, recommend their Example to them, and bid them *call to mind their Faith*, and exemplary Converſation among them, and propoſe it for a Pattern to themſelves, conſidering the happy *End* of it, *viz.* the Bleſſed State they were now in, and the glorious Reward they were made Partakers of, in another life.

In the words thus explained, you have,

I. A Duty enjoyned; which is, to propoſe to our ſelves, for our Imitation, the Examples of Good Men, that have gone before us; eſpecially the Primitive Patterns of Chriſtianity, and the firſt Teachers of our Religion. *Remember them which have been your Guides, and have ſpoken to you the Word of God, whoſe Faith follow.*

II. The Motive or Encouragement to it, from the Conſideration of the Reward of it; *conſidering the End of their Converſation.*

I. The Duty enjoyned; which is, to

to propoſe to our ſelves, for our Imitation, the Example of Good Men, that have gone before us; eſpecially the Primitive Patterns of Chriſtianity, and firſt Teachers of our Religion. *Remember them that have had the rule over you, that have been your Guides, and have ſpoken to you the word of God, whoſe Faith follow.* In which words, the Apoſtle bids them call to mind their firſt Guides and Inſtructors in Chriſtianity, whom they had known, and heard, and converſed with in this world, but who were now *reſted from their labours*, and were receiving the Reward of them; to remember the Doctrines they heard from them, and the Virtues they had ſeen in them; and to embrace the one, and imitate the other.

Thus *We* cannot remember the Primitive Teachers, and Patterns of Chriſtianity, the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour; becauſe *we* did not perſonally know them, and converſe with them, living at the diſtance of many Ages from their time: But *we* may do that which is equivalent, and a kind of Remembrance of them; we may

commemmorate their Faith, and the Virtue and Holineſs of their lives; and what we hear and read of them, we may propoſe for Patterns to our ſelves, and copy them out in our lives and actions: And this is *our* Duty, and the ſame in ſubſtance with *theirs*, who had the happineſs to know, and converſe with thoſe excellent Perſons, to hear them preach, and to ſee the Rules and Precepts of that holy Doctrine, which they taught, exemplified in their lives.

In the handling of this Argument, I ſhall do theſe *three* things.

*Firſt*, Shew why amongſt all the Examples of Good Men, we ſhould more eſpecially propoſe to our Imitation, the *Primitive* Teachers, and Patterns of our Religion.

*Secondly*, Wherein we ſhould imitate them. The Apoſtle expreſſeth it in one word, in their Faith; *whoſe Faith follow.*

*Thirdly*, The Encouragement to this, from the Conſideration of the happy ſtate

ſtate they are in, and the glorious Reward they are made Partakers of; *Conſidering the End of their Converſation.*

*Firſt*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, why among all the Examples of Good Men, we ſhould more eſpecially propoſe to our imitation, the *Primitive* Teachers, and Patterns of our Religion, I mean, the holy Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour, *whoſe Faith* we ſhould endeavour *to follow*, and to imitate the holineſs and virtue of their Converſation. For *Theſe* certainly come neareſt to that moſt perfect, and excellent Pattern of all Goodneſs, *our bleſſed Saviour*, and are the faireſt *Tranſcripts* of that unblemiſht *Original.* Hence it is, that St. *Paul* ſo frequently exhorts Chriſtians to imitate *his* Example, and the Examples of the other *Apoſtles*; it being reaſonable to preſume, that *they* came neareſt to the Pattern of our Lord. 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.* Phil. 3. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have*

*us for an Enſample. For our Converſation is in Heaven.*

And this is reaſonable, that the *firſt* in every kind ſhould be *the Rule and Pattern* of the reſt, and of all that follow after; becauſe it is likely to be moſt perfect. In proceſs of time, the beſt Inſtitutions are apt to decline, and by inſenſible degrees to ſwerve, and depart from the Perfection of their firſt ſtate; and therefore it is a good Rule, to preſerve things from corruption and degeneracy, often to look back to the firſt Inſtitution, and by that to correct thoſe Imperfections and Errors, which will almoſt unavoidably creep in with time.

If we would preſerve that Purity of Faith and Manners, which our Religion requires, we ſhould have frequent recourſe to the Primitive Teachers and Patterns of Chriſtianity, and endeavour to bring our Belief and Lives to as near a Conformity with theirs, as is poſſible. Who ſo likely to deliver the Faith and Doctrine of Chriſt pure, and uncorrupted, as the Primitive Teachers of it, who received it from our

our Lord himſelf; and were, by an extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, ſecured from Error and Miſtake in the delivery of it? And who ſo likely to bring their Lives and Converſations to an exact Conformity with this holy Doctrine, as they, who were ſo throughly inſtructed in it by the beſt Maſter, and ſhewn the Practice of it in the moſt perfect Example of all Holineſs and Virtue? Great Reaſon there is therefore, why all Chriſtians ſhould follow *their* Faith, and make *their* Converſation more eſpecially the Patterns of their Lives.

The want of a due regard to theſe *Fountains* of Chriſtian Doctrine, and the *firſt* and *beſt* Patterns of Chriſtian Practice, hath been the great Cauſe of that foul degeneracy of the Romiſh Church, both in the Doctrine and Practice of Chriſtianity. They do not follow the Faith of the *Apoſtles*, the *firſt Fathers* and Teachers of *Chriſtianity*; but of *the Fathers of the Council of Lateran, and Trent.* Thus have they *forſaken the Fountain of living waters*, the holy Scriptures, *and*

*have hewn to themſelves broken Ciſterns, that will hold no water*; the Doctrines and Traditions of Men. Nay they have ſtopt up this *Fountain of living waters* from the People, and forbid them to come to it; and forced them to drink of thoſe impure and puddled Streams, which they let out to them; and inſtead of the lives of *the holy Apoſtles*, and thoſe eminent *Graces* and *Virtues* which ſhined forth in them, they repreſent to them the Patterns of *new Saints*; ſome of which *neither they nor their Fathers knew*, and indeed never were in being; as St. *Almanach*, and St. *Synoris*, and ſeveral others; many of them ſo far from being *Saints*, that they may be reckoned among the *worſt* of Men; (for inſtance, our Countryman *Thomas à Becket*, who, for Pride and Rebellion may almoſt vye with *Lucifer* himſelf; and yet this ill Man, and worſt of Subjects, was canonized to that height, as for two hundred years together, to engroſs the Worſhip of theſe Weſtern parts of the World, and to impoveriſh the Shrines of all other Saints, even of *the Bleſſed Virgin* her ſelf;) others, ſuch *Ideots*, or hot-headed *Fanaticks*,

*naticks*, that he that reads their Lives, would take them to be *Fools* and *Madmen*, rather than *Saints*, (as *Francis*, and *Dominick*, and *Ignatius Loyola*, and ſeveral others of the ſame ſtamp;) and many the very beſt of them, ſo diſguiſed by their Legends, that inſtead of the ſubſtantial Virtues of a Good Life, their ſtory is made up of falſe and fantaſtical Miracles, and Ridiculous Freaks of Superſtition.

All which conſidered, there is great Reaſon, why we ſhould have recourſe to the *Primitive* Patterns of Faith and Holineſs, *and be followers of them, who* we are ſure *were followers of Chriſt*. I proceed to the

*Second* Thing I propoſed, namely wherein we ſhould imitate theſe Patterns. And the Apoſtle expreſſeth it in one word, in their Faith, *Whoſe faith follow*. And the word *Faith* is frequently in the New Teſtament uſed ſo largely, as to comprehend the whole Condition of the Goſpel; a firm Belief of the Doctrine of it, and the Fruit and Effect of this Belief, in a good Converſation. And that *Faith* here in the *Text*, takes in a holy life, is evident from what follows,

follows, *Whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their Converſation*; from whence it is evident, that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch a *Faith*, as ſhews forth it ſelf in a good *Converſation.*

So that we may very well ſuppoſe the Apoſtle here to recommend *the Primitive Faith* to our imitation, in theſe *Four* reſpects.

1. In regard of the *Sincerity* and *Purity* of it.

2. In regard of the *Firmneſs* and *Stability* of it.

3. Of their *Conſtancy*, and *Perſeverance* in it.

4. Of the *Efficacy* and *Fruitfulneſs* of it, in a good Converſation. All theſe may be collected from the Expreſſions and Circumſtances of the *Text.*

1. We are to imitate theſe *Primitive* Patterns, in the *Sincerity* and *Purity* of their Faith; I mean, that the Faith which we profeſs, be the ſincere Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and the pure Word

Word of God, free from all mixture of Humane Additions and Inventions, and not made up, as the Faith of the *Phariſees* was among the *Jews*, and theirs of the Church of *Rome* is at this day, of *the Word of God*, and *the Doctrines and Traditions of Men*; not like the *Creed* of Pope *Pius* the IV. (which is now the Standard of the *Roman* Faith) conſiſting of the 12 *Old* Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, delivered to us by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and as many *new* ones, coined and ſtampt by their later Councils. This is not *to follow the Faith* of the Apoſtles, and firſt Patterns of Chriſtianity, *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, as St. *Jude* calls it. This is to have our Faith ſtand upon the Authority of Men, and not on the Word of God; whereas we are *to follow the Faith of the firſt Guides* of the Chriſtian Church, *who ſpake unto them the Word of God*, as the Apoſtle expreſly chargeth here in the *Text*.

2. We are to imitate them, in the *Stability* and *Firmneſs* of our Faith, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be *ſhaken*, and removed from it, *by every wind of new Doctrine*;

*Doctrine*; the Faith of Chriſt being unchangeable, as Chriſt himſelf. And that by following the Faith of the Primitive Guides and Teachers of Chriſtianity, the Apoſtle here means, that we ſhould *be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable* in it, is plain from what follows immediately after the Text; *Whoſe faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation.* Jeſus Chriſt, *the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carryed about with divers and ſtrange doctrines: for it is a good thing, that the heart be eſtabliſht with grace,* that is, in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is frequently called *the grace of God.*

3. We are to imitate them, in the *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance* of their Faith; and that, notwithſtanding all the Diſcountenance and Oppoſition, the Perſecution and Suffering, which attend the Profeſſion of this Faith; which the Apoſtle ſufficiently intimates in this Epiſtle, to have been the Condition of thoſe Chriſtians, to whom he wrote; and therefore he propoſeth ſo many Examples to them, of conſtant and patient Suffering for God and his Truth; and it is probable enough,

nough, that the Apoſtle here recommends the Example of thoſe, who were the Primitive *Martyrs*, as well as Teachers of Chriſtianity. He had before propoſed to them the *living* Examples of thoſe, who were under actual Perſecution and Sufferings for the Goſpel, v. 3. *Remember thoſe that are in bonds, and thoſe that ſuffer adverſity*; and here in the 7. v. he ſeems to propoſe the Pattern of thoſe, who had laid down their lives, and *dyed* for the Faith; *Remember thoſe who have been your Guides, and have ſpoken to you the word of God, whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation*, τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς, which may be render'd, *the laſt act of their lives*, the manner of their going out of the World, perhaps by Martyrdome; as if he had ſaid, imitate them in their Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Faith, even to the laſt, in laying down their lives for it. And thus we ſhould be ready to do, if God calls us to it. However, it is certain, the Apoſtle meant their Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Faith to the laſt, and their dying *in*, if not *for* the Faith of Chriſt. And this is neceſſary, if we expect *the Crown of life*, and hope for the

the ſame happy *End*, which they had; for none but *they that continue to the end, ſhall be ſaved.*

4. We ſhould imitate them, in the *efficacy* and *fruitfulneſs* of their Faith, in the Practice and Virtues of a good life. *Whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation*, that is, their Perſeverance in *a holy courſe* to the end. And theſe muſt never be ſeparated; *a ſound faith*, and *a good life*. Without this, *our faith is* barren and *dead*, as St. *James* tells us, *ch.* 2. v. 17. Our Knowledge and Belief of the Chriſtian Doctrine, muſt manifeſt it ſelf in a good Converſation. *Who is a wiſe man* (ſays the ſame St. *James*, ch. 3. v. 13.) *Who is a wiſe man, and endowed with knowledge amongſt you? Let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works. This is a faithful ſaying*, ſaith St. *Paul* to *Titus*, ch. 3. v. 8. *and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.*

And herein the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour were eminent Examples. They lived as they Taught, and Practiſed the Doctrine which they Preached.

Preached. So St. *Paul* ſtrictly chargeth *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be thou an example of the Believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in faith, in purity.* And our Saviour tells us, that hereby chiefly falſe Prophets and Teachers might be known from the true Apoſtles of Chriſt, *Matt.* 7. 20. *By their fruits ye ſhall know them.* And indeed we do not *follow the faith* of thoſe Excellent Perſons, if we do not *abound in all the fruits of righteouſneſs, which, by Jeſus Chriſt, are to the praiſe and glory of God.* I come now to the

*Third* and *Laſt* Thing I Propoſed, *viz.* the Encouragement to this, from the Conſideration of the happy ſtate of thoſe Perſons, who are propoſed to us for Patterns, and the glorious Reward which they are made Partakers of in another World. *Conſidering the end of their converſation* τ ἔκβασιν, *their egreſs*, or *departure* out of this life, into a Bleſſed and Glorious State, where they have Received the Crown and Reward of their Faith, and Patience, and Pious Converſation in this World; or elſe, (which comes much to one,) *conſidering the concluſion of their lives*, with

with what Patience and Comfort they left the World, and with what joyful Aſſurance of the happy Condition they were going to, and were to continue in for ever.

And this is a great encouragement to Conſtancy, and Perſeverance in Faith and Holineſs, to ſee with what Chearfulneſs aud Comfort good Men die, and with what a firm and ſteady Perſwaſion of the Happineſs they are entring upon. For who would not be glad to leave the World, in that Calmneſs and Serenity of Mind, and comfortable Aſſurance of a bleſſed Eternity? Bad Men wiſh this, and are ready to ſay with *Balaam*, *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.* But if we would have the Comfort of *ſuch a Death*, we muſt live *ſuch Lives*, and imitate the Faith and good Converſation of thoſe, whom we deſire to reſemble in the manner of their Death, and to go into the ſame happy ſtate that they are in after Death. If we do not make their *Lives* our Pattern; we muſt not expect to be conformable to them, in the happy Manner

of

of their *Death.* When we hear of the Death of an eminently good Man, we do not doubt but he is happy; and are confident, that he will meet with the Reward of his Piety and Goodneſs in another World. If we believe this of him; let us endeavour to be like him; that we may attain the ſame Happineſs, which we believe him to be poſſeſt of; and, as the Apoſtle exhorts, ch. 6. 12. *Let us not be ſlothful; but followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* Let us *ſhew the ſame Diligence* that they did; that we may have the ſame *full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End,* which they had.

The *Inference* from this Diſcourſe, which I have made upon this Argument, is, to ſhew what Uſe we ought to make of theſe excellent Examples, which are ſet before us, of the firſt Founders and Teachers of our Religion, and what is the proper Honour and Reſpect, which we ought to pay to their Memory: Not *Invocation* and *Adoration*; but a zealous *Imitation* of their Faith, and good Converſation. The greateſt Honour we can do them,

the moſt acceptable to God, the moſt grateful to them, and the moſt beneficial to ourſelves, is to endeavour to be like them: Not to make any Images, and Likeneſs of them, to fall down before them, and worſhip them; but to Form the Image of their Faith and Virtues upon our Hearts and Lives: Not to Pray to them; but to Praiſe God for ſuch bright and glorious Examples, and to endeavour with all our Might to imitate their Faith, and Patience, and Piety, and Humility, and Meekneſs, and Charity, and all thoſe other Virtues which were ſo reſplendent in them. And this is *to remember* the Founders of our Religion as we ought, *to follow their Faith*, and *to conſider the end of their Converſation.*

Had the Chriſtian Religion required, or intended any ſuch thing, as of later Times hath been practiſed in the World; it had been as eaſy for the Apoſtle to have ſaid, *Remember them that have been your Guids, and have ſpoken to you the Word of God, to erect Images to them, and to worſhip them with due Veneration, and to pray to them*

*and*

*and make uſe of their Interceſſion.* But no ſuch thing is ſaid, or the leaſt Intimation given of it, either in this Text, or any other in the whole Bible; but very much to the contrary.

Their Example indeed is frequently recommended to us, for our Imitation and Encouragement; and for this Reaſon, the Providence of God hath taken particular Care, that the Memory of the Apoſtles, and ſo many primitive Chriſtians and Martyrs, ſhould be tranſmitted to Poſterity; that Chriſtians in all ſucceeding Ages might propound theſe Patterns to themſelves, and have perpetually before their Eyes the Piety and Virtue of their Lives, and their patient and conſtant Sufferings for the Truth; that when God ſhall pleaſe to call us to the like Tryals, *we may not be wearied and faint in our Minds; but being compaſſed about with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes*, having ſo many Examples in our Eye of thoſe, *who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes*, and do now as it were look down from their happy State upon us here below, who are combating with manifold

Temptations, to ſee how we behave and acquit our ſelves in our Chriſtian Courſe, we may take encouragement to our ſelves, from ſuch Examples, and ſuch Spectators, to *run with Patience the Race which is ſet before us.*

I know indeed that other Uſe than this hath been, and is at this Day made of the Memory of the Saints and Martyrs of former Ages, very diſhonourable to God, and very grievous to them, if they be ſenſible of what is done here below; I mean to Worſhip them, and to Pray to them, and (to the great Diſparagement of the powerful Interceſſion of *our great High Prieſt, Jeſus the Son of God*) to make them the Mediators and Interceſſors in Heaven with God for us. Of this the Scripture hath no where given us the leaſt intimation; but hath expreſly commanded the contrary, *to worſhip the Lord our God, and him only to ſerve*; and *to pray to him alone, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only Mediator betwixt God and Man.* Nor are there any Footſteps of any ſuch Practice, in the Primitive Church, for the firſt Three Hundred Years; as is acknowledged

acknowledged by our moſt Learned Adverſaries of the Church of *Rome*.

The Scripture no where propounds the Saints to us, for *Objects of our Worſhip*; but for *the Patterns of our lives*. This is the greateſt Reſpect and Veneration, that we can, or ought to pay to them; and whatever is beyond this, is *a Voluntary Humility*, injurious to God and our Bleſſed Saviour, and moſt certainly diſpleaſing to thoſe, whom we pretend to Honour; if they know how Men play the fool about them here below.

Let us then endeavour to be like them, in the Holy and Virtuous Actions of their Lives, in their conſtant Patience and Suffering for the Truth; if God ſhall call us thereto. And we may be like them, if we do but ſincerely endeavour it, and pray to God for his Grace and Aſſiſtance to that end. For theſe Examples were not left for our *Admiration* only; but for our *Imitation*. We frequently read the Lives of the Apoſtles and firſt Founders of our Religion: But I know not how it comes to paſs, we chooſe ra-

ther lazily to *admire* them, than vigorouſly to *follow* them; as if the Piety of the firſt Chriſtians were *Miraculous*, and not at all intended for the imitation of ſucceeding Ages; as if Heaven and Earth, God and Men, and all things were alter'd, ſince that time; as if Chriſtianity were then in its Youthful Age and Vigour, but is ſince decayed, and grown old, and hath quite loſt its Power and Virtue. And indeed the generality of Chriſtians live at ſuch a faint and careleſs rate, as to make the World believe, that either all the Stories of the Primitive Chriſtians are Fables; or elſe, that the Force of Chriſtianity is ſtrangely abated, and that the Holy Spirit of God hath forſaken the Earth, and is retired to the Father. But Truth never grows old, and thoſe Laws of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, which are contained in the Goſpel, are ſtill as reaſonable, and apt to gain upon the Minds of Men, as ever. God is the ſame he was, and our Bleſſed Saviour is ſtill at the Right Hand of God, Interceding powerfully for Sinners, for *mercy and grace to help in time of need.* The Promiſes and Threatnings

of

of the Goſpel are ſtill as true and powerful as ever; and the Holy Spirit of God is ſtill in the World, and effectually works in them that believe.

Let us not then deceive our ſelves in this matter. The Primitive Chriſtians were *Men like our ſelves, ſubject to the ſame Paſſions that we are,* and *compaſſed about with the ſame Infirmities*; ſo that altho' that extraordinary Spirit and Power of Miracles, which God endowed them withal, for the firſt planting and propagating of the Goſpel in the World, be now ceaſed; yet the ſanctifying Power and Virtue of Gods Holy Spirit, does ſtill accompany the Goſpel, and is ready to aſſiſt us in every good work.

In a word: We have all that is neceſſary to work the ſame Graces and Virtues in us, which were in them; and if we be not ſlothful, and wanting to our ſelves, we may *follow their faith,* and at laſt *attain the end of it, even the Salvation of our Souls.*

Let us then, from an idle admiring

of thoſe excellent Patterns, proceed to a vigorous imitation of them, and be ſo far from being diſcouraged by the Excellency of them, as to make even *that*, Matter and Ground of encouragement to our ſelves; according to that of *Tertullian*, *Admonetur omnis ætas fieri poſſe, quod aliquando factum eſt*; *all Ages to the end of the World may be convinced, that what hath been done, is poſſible to be done.* There have been ſuch Holy and Excellent Perſons in the World; and therefore it is poſſible for Men to be ſuch.

*Let us not then be ſlothful, but followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes. Since we are compaſt about with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes; let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which ſo eaſily beſets us, and let us run with Patience the Race which is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame, and is now ſet down at the right hand of God.*

A

# SERMON

Preached on

# All-Saints Day.

2 Tim. II. 11, 12.

*It is a faithful ſaying; For if we be dead with him, we ſhall alſo live with him: If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him: If we deny him, he alſo will deny us.*

IN the begining of this Chapter, St. *Paul* encourageth *Timothy* to continue ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding the Sufferings

Sufferings which attended it; Verſe 1. *Thou therefore my Son, be ſtrong in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; and Verſe 3. *Thou therefore endure hardſhip, as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* And to animate him in this reſolution, he quotes *a Saying*, which it ſeems was well known and firmly believed among Chriſtians; *a Saying* on the one hand full of Encouragement to thoſe who with Patience and Conſtancy Suffered for their Religion; and on the other hand, full of Terrour to thoſe who for fear of Suffering denyed it.

*It is a faithful ſaying.* This is a Preface uſed by this Apoſtle, to introduce ſome remarkable Sentence, of more than ordinary weight and concernment; 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave Sinners*; and chap. 4. 8, 9. *Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having a promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation.* Titus 3. 8. *This is a faithful ſaying; and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly*

*conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.* And here in the Text, the ſame Preface is uſed to ſignify the Importance of *the ſaying* he was about to mention; *It is a faithful ſaying; If we be dead with him, we ſhall alſo live with him: If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him: If we deny him, he will deny us.*

The Firſt Two Sentences are Matter of Encouragement to thoſe who Suffer with Chriſt, and for him, and are the very ſame in Senſe. *If we be dead with him*, that is, if we lay down our lives for the Teſtimony of the Truth, as he did; *we ſhall alſo live with him*, that is, we ſhall in like manner be made Partakers of Immortality, as he is: *If we ſuffer* or endure as he did, *we ſhall alſo reign with him* in Glory.

The other Sentence is Matter of Terrour to thoſe who deny him and his Truth. *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us*; to which is ſubjoyned another Saying much to the ſame Senſe; *if we believe not*, εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, *if we be unfaithful,*

*ful; yet he remaineth faithful, he cannot deny himself*; that is, he will be as good as his word, and make good that Solemn Threatning which he hath denounced againſt thoſe, who ſhall for fear of Suffering deny him and his Truth.

The Words being thus explained, I ſhall begin with the *Firſt* Part of this remarkable *Saying*; *If we be dead with him, we ſhall alſo live with him: If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him.* This it ſeems, was a noted *Saying* among Chriſtians; and whether they had it by Tradition of our Saviour, or whether it was in familiar uſe among the Apoſtles, as a very proper and powerful Argument to keep Chriſtians ſtedfaſt to their Religion, I cannot determine. It is certain, that *Sayings* to this Senſe are very frequent, eſpecially in the Epiſtles of St. *Paul.* Rom. 6. 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death; we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection*; and Verſe 8. *Now if we be dead with Chriſt; we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.* 2 Cor. 4. 10. *Always bearing about in the body, the dying of our Lord Jeſus; that*

*that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body*; and Verſe 11. *For we which live, are alway delivered unto death for Jeſus ſake; that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh*; and Rom. 8. 17. *If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may be alſo glorified together.* Phil 3. 10, 11. *That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death: If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.* 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as tho' ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you; but rejoyce, in as much as ye are partakers of Chriſts ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.*

You ſee that the Senſe of this *Saying* was in frequent uſe among the Apoſtles, as a powerful Argument to Encourage Chriſtians to Conſtancy in their Religion, notwithſtanding the Dangers and Sufferings which attended it. *This is a faithful ſaying: If we be dead with him, we ſhall alſo live with him: If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him.*

And

And the Force of this Argument will beſt appear, by taking into conſideration theſe *Two* things;

I. What Virtue there is in a firm Belief and Perſuaſion of a Bleſſed Immortality in another World, to ſupport and bear up Mens Spirits, under the greateſt Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake; and even to animate them, if God ſhall call them to it, to lay down their Lives for their Religion.

II. How it may be made out to be reaſonable, for Men to Embrace and Voluntarily to ſubmit to Preſent and Grievous Sufferings, in Hopes of a Future Happineſs and Reward; concerning which we have not, nor perhaps are capable of having the ſame degree of Certainty and Aſſurance, which we have of the Evils and Sufferings of this preſent Life.

I. What Virtue there is in a firm Belief and Perſuaſion of a Bleſſed Immortality in another World, to ſupport and bear up Mens Spirits, under

der the greateſt Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake; and even to animate them, if God ſhould call them to it, to lay down their Lives for their Religion.

If Men do firmly believe that they ſhall change this Temporal and Miſerable Life, for an Endleſs State of Happineſs and Glory, and that they ſhall meet with a Reward of their Sufferings, infinitely beyond the proportion of them, both in the Weight and Duration of it; this muſt needs turn the Scales on that ſide, on which there is the greateſt Weight: And there is a ſufficient ground for a firm Belief of this. For if any thing can certainly be concluded from the Providence of God, this may, That Good Men ſhall be happy one time or other: And becauſe they are very often great Sufferers in this Life; that there is another State remains for them after this Life, wherein they ſhall meet with a full Reward of all their Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake.

But beſides the Reaſonableneſs of this, from the conſideration of Gods Providence

Providence; we have now a clear and expreſs Revelation of it; *life and immortality being brought to light by the Goſpel.* This St. *John* tells us is *the great Promiſe* of the Goſpel, 1 John 2. 25. *This is the promiſe which he hath promiſed us; even eternal life.* And *this Promiſe*, our Saviour moſt expreſly makes to thoſe who Suffer for him, *Matt.* 5. 10, 11, 12. *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake. Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.* Mark 10. 29. *Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake and the Goſpels; but he ſhall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, with perſecutions,* (that is, ſo far as a State of Perſecution would admit) *and in the world to come eternal life.*

And if ſuch a Perſwaſion be firmly fixt in our Minds; the Faith of another World, and the aſſured Hope of Eternal

Eternal Life and Happineſs, muſt needs have a mighty Force and Efficacy upon the Minds of ſober and conſiderate Men; becauſe there is no proportion between Suffering for a little while, and being Unſpeakably and Eternally Happy. So St. *Paul* tells us, he calculated the matter, Rom. 8. 18. *I reckon* (ſays he) *that the ſufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.* The vaſt diſproportion, between the Sufferings of a few days, and the Joys and Glory of Eternity, when it is once firmly believed by us, will weigh down all the Evils and Calamities of this World, and give us Courage and Conſtancy under them. For why ſhould *we faint*; if we believe, that *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory*? as the ſame, St. *Paul* aſſures us, 2 *Cor.* 4.17. If our Minds be but throughly poſſeſt with the hopes of a Reſurrection to a Better and Happier life; this will make Death, attended even with Extremity of Terrour, to be Tolerable; as we read of ſome, in that long Catalogue of

Saints and Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. 35. *Others were tortured, not accepting delivevance; that they might obtain a better reſurrection.* It would make a Man to rejoyce in the Ruin and Diſſolution of *this earthly tabernacle*, to be aſſured, that *when it is diſſolved, we ſhall have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, as the ſame Apoſtle aſſures us, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. Thus you ſee what Virtue there is in the firm Belief and Perſuaſion of a better life, to bear up Mens Spirits under thoſe Sufferings and Torments, which may *ſeem unſupportable* to Humane Nature.

And *ſo* indeed they would *be*, without an extraordinary Grace and Aſſiſtance of God, to enable them to bear thoſe Sufferings, which his Providence permits them to be exerciſed withal. But of *this extraordinary Grace*, we are aſſured, not only from the conſideration of the Attributes and Providence of God; but likewiſe from the expreſs Promiſes and Declarations of his Word.

The Attributes of God and his Providence, give us good Grounds to believe that

that *he* who loves Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, and hath a Peculiar Favour and Regard for Good Men, will never ſuffer his Faithful Friends and Servants, to be brought into that Diſtreſs for Righteouſneſs ſake, that they ſhall not be able to endure thoſe Evils and Afflictions which befal them upon that Account: And if in the Courſe of his Providence, any thing happen to them that is above the ordinary Conſtancy and Patience of Humane Nature to bear, that in ſuch a caſe, God will extraordinarily interpoſe, and give them Strength and Patience, Support and Comfort, proportionable to the Evils and Sufferings that are upon them; and that he will either lighten their Burden, or add to their Strength; he will either mitigate their Pain, or increaſe their Patience; either he will check and reſtrain the Effect of Natural Cauſes; as in the caſe of the *three Children*, that were in the fiery Furnace; and of *Daniel*, who was caſt into the Den of Lions; or elſe, (which comes to the ſame Iſſue,) if he will ſuffer Cauſes to have their Natural Courſe, he will afford Supernatural Comforts, to ballance the Fury and Extremity

tremity of them. This is very credible, from the meer conſideration of Gods Goodneſs, and of the Particular Care and Favour of his Providence towards Good Men.

But beſides *this*, we have the Expreſs Promiſe and Declaration of Gods Word, to this purpoſe, which puts us out of all doubt concerning that which we had good Reaſon to hope and expect before. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. St. *Paul* there tells the Chriſtians at *Corinth*, that tho' they had met with ſome Troubles; yet they had not been Tryed with the Extremity of Suffering: but when that ſhould happen, they had no cauſe to doubt, but God would enable them to bear it. *There hath no Temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man*; that is, you have not yet been exerciſed with any Trial, but what is Humane; what the ordinary Strength and Reſolution of Humane Nature is able to bear: But in caſe it ſhould come to extream Suffering, and that they muſt either comply with the Heathen Idolatry, or endure Extremity of Torments; they had the Promiſe of Gods help,

to

to ſupport them in that caſe. *God is faithful*, ſays he, *who will not ſuffer you to be tempted, above that you are able to bear; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it*: And then it follows, *wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from Idolatry*; that is, let no Suffering that you are Tempted withal, make you guilty of *this Sin*. And 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. The Preſence of Gods Spirit, in a very glorious manner, for our Support and Comfort, is promiſed to thoſe who Suffer for him. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon you.*

And *this* conſideration, of Gods Strength to ſupport us under Sufferings, makes the *other*, of the Reward of them, a Perfect and Compleat Encouragement; which it could not be without it. For if upon the whole matter, the Preſent Sufferings of Good Men were intolerable, and Humane Nature were not Divinely aſſiſted to bear them: how great ſoever the Future Reward promiſed to them ſhould be; they that lay under them would be forced to conſult their own preſent

Eaſe and Deliverance. I proceed to the

II. Thing I propoſed to conſider, namely, How it may be made out to be reaſonable, to Embrace and Voluntarily to ſubmit to preſent and Grievous Sufferings, in Hopes of future Happineſs and Reward; concerning which we have not, nor perhaps are capable of having the ſame degree of Certainty and Aſſurance, which we have of the Evils and Sufferings of this Preſent Life.

Now granting that we have not the ſame Degree of Certainty concerning our future Happineſs, that we have of our preſent Sufferings which we feel, or ſee juſt ready to come upon us; yet Prudence making it neceſſary for Men to run this hazard, does juſtifie the Reaſonableneſs of it. This I take to be *a known and rul'd Caſe* in the common Affairs of Life, and in matters of Temporal concernment; and Men act upon this Principle every day. The Husband-man parts with his Corn, and caſts it into the Earth, in confidence that it will ſpring up again, and at the time of

of Harveſt bring him a conſiderable return and advantage. He parts with a Certainty, in hope only of a great future Benefit: And tho' he have no Demonſtration, for the Infallible Succeſs of his Labour and Hazard; yet he acts very reaſonably: becauſe if he does not take this courſe, he runs a greater and more certain Hazard, of Periſhing by Famine at laſt, when his Preſent Stock is ſpent. The Caſe of the Merchant is the ſame, who parts with a Preſent Eſtate, in hopes of a Future Improvement; which yet is not ſo certain, as what he parts withal.

And if this be reaſonable in *theſe* Caſes; then the hazard which Men run, upon much greater Aſſurance, than either the Husbandman or the Merchant have, is much more reaſonable. When we part with this Life in hopes of one infinitely better; that is, *in ſure and certain hope of a reſurrection to eternal life*; and when we ſubmit to Preſent Sufferings, to avoid an Eternity of Miſery, which is much more to be dreaded than Temporal Want; this is reaſonable: becauſe here is a much greater

Advantage in view, and a more preſſing Neceſſity in the caſe; nothing being ſo deſirable to one that muſt live for ever, as to be happy for ever; and nothing to be avoided by him with ſo much care, as everlaſting Miſery and Ruin. And for our ſecurity of obtaining the one, and eſcaping the other, we have *the promiſe of God, who cannot lye*; which is all the Certainty and Security that things Future and Inviſible are capable of.

Nay, I will go lower. If God had made no expreſs Promiſe and Declaration of a Future Happineſs and Reward, to thoſe that ſerve him and ſuffer for him: yet if any Man out of a ſincere Love to God, and awful Regard to his Laws, endure Trouble and Affliction; if there be a God and Providence, this is Aſſurance enough to us, that our Services and Sufferings ſhall one time or other be Conſidered and Rewarded. For, as ſure as any Man is, that there is a God, and that his Providence regards the Actions of Men; ſo ſure are we, that no Man ſhall finally be a loſer, by any thing that he doth or ſuffers for him.

So

So that the Matter is now brought to this plain Iſſue; That if it be reaſonable to believe there is a God, and that his Providence regards and conſiders the Actions of Men; it is alſo reaſonable to endure Preſent Sufferings, in hope of a Future Reward; and there is certainly enough in this Caſe, to govern and determine a Prudent Man, that is in any good meaſure Perſuaded of another Life after this, and hath any tolerable conſideration of and regard to his Eternal Intereſt.

Indeed, if we were ſure that there were no Life after this; if we had no expectation of a Happineſs or Miſery beyond this World; the wiſeſt thing that any Man could do, would be to enjoy as much of the Preſent Contentments and Satisfactions of this World, as he could fairly come at. For *if there be no reſurrection to another life*; the Apoſtle allows the reaſoning of the *Epicure* to be very good, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye.* But on the other hand, if it be true, that we are deſigned for Immortality, and that another State remains for us after

after this Life, wherein we ſhall be unſpeakably Happy, or intolerably and eternally Miſerable, according as we have behaved our ſelves in this World; it is then evidently reaſonable, that Men ſhould take the greateſt care of the longeſt Duration, and be content to bear, and diſpenſe with ſome Preſent Trouble and Inconvenience, for a Felicity that will have no end; and be willing to Labour and take Pains, and deny our preſent Eaſe and Comfort, for a little while, that we may be happy for ever. This is reckoned Prudence in the Account of this World, for a Man to part with a Preſent Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment, for a much greater Advantage in Reverſion: But ſurely the diſproportion between *Time* and *Eternity*, is *ſo vaſt*; that did Men but firmly believe that they ſhall *live for ever*, nothing in this World could reaſonably be thought too good to part withal, or too grievous to ſuffer, for the obtaining of a Bleſſed Immortality.

In the Virtue of this Belief and Perſuaſion, the Primitive Chriſtians were fortified, againſt all that the Malice and

and Cruelty of the World could do againſt them; and they thought they made a very wiſe Bargain, if *through many tribulations they might* at laſt *enter into the kingdom of God*; becauſe they believed, that the Joys of Heaven would abundantly recompence all their Sorrows and Sufferings upon Earth. And ſo confident were they of this, that they looked upon it as a ſpecial Favour and Regard of God to them, to call them to Suffer for his Name. So St. *Paul* ſpeaks of it, Phil. 1. 29. *Unto you it is given, on the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him; but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.* Yea, they accounted *them* happy, who upon this account were miſerable in this World. So St. *James* expreſly pronounceth of them, Jam. 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation*; (meaning the Temptation of Perſecution and Suffering) *for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* And this conſideration was that, which kept up their Spirits from ſinking under the weight of their greateſt Sufferings. So St. *Paul* tells us, 2 Cor. 4. 14, 16. *Knowing that he which raiſ-*

*ed*

*ed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus. For which cauſe we faint not; but tho' our outward man periſh: yet our inward man is renewed day by day.* The Sufferings of their Bodies, did but help to raiſe and fortifie their Spirits: nay, ſo far were they from fainting under thoſe Afflictions; that they rejoyced and gloried in them. So the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3. that in the midſt of their Sufferings, *they rejoyced in hope of the glory of God; and that they gloried in tribulations*, as being the way to be made Partakers of that Glory; and *Heb.* 10. 34. That *they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods; knowing in themſelves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* And for this Reaſon, St. *James*, Chap. 1. 2. exhorts Chriſtians *to account it all joy, when they fell into divers temptations*; (that is, various kinds of Sufferings) becauſe of the manifold Advantages which from thence would redound to them.

Now what was it that inſpired them to all this Courage and Chearfulneſs; but the Belief of a mighty Reward, far beyond the Proportion of

of all their Sufferings, and a firm Perſuaſion that they ſhould be vaſt Gainers by them at the laſt? This conſideration St. *Paul* urgeth with great force, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen; but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.* If we would compare things juſtly, and attentively regard and conſider *the inviſible* Glories of another World, as well as *the things which are ſeen*; we ſhould eaſily perceive, that he who Suffers for God and Religion, does not *renounce* Happineſs; but *puts it out to Intereſt*, upon terms of the greateſt advantage.

I ſhall now ſpeak briefly to the

*Second* Part of this remarkable *Saying* in the *Text*; *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us.* To which is ſubjoyned in the words following, *if we believe not*; ἀπιςῶμεν, *if we deal unfaithfully with him*; *yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf*; that is, he will be conſtant to his Word, and make good

*that*

*that ſolemn Threatning* which he hath denounced againſt thoſe, who for fear of Suffering ſhall deny him and his Truth before Men, Matt. 10. 33. *Whoſoever* (ſaith our Lord there) *ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven.* Mark. 8. 38. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.* This is a Terrible Threatning, *to be diſowned by Chriſt at the day of Judgment, in the preſence of God and his Holy Angels*; and this Threatning will certainly be made good; and tho' we may renounce him, *and break our faith with him; yet he remains faithful*, who hath threatned, and *cannot deny himſelf.*

This is matter of great Terrour, and ſeriouſly to be thought upon by thoſe who are tempted to deny Chriſt and his Truth, either by the hope of wordly Advantage, or the fear of temporal Sufferings. What worldly Advantage can we propoſe to our ſelves, by quitting our Religion, which can be

be thought an equal price, for the loſs of our immortal Souls, and of the Happineſs of all Eternity? Suppoſe the whole World were offered us in conſideration; yet *what is a man profited; if he ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own Soul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* as our Saviour reaſons, *Matt.* 16. 26.

And on the other hand, if the Fear of Temporal Suffering be ſuch a Terrour to Men, as to ſhake their Conſtancy in Religion, and to tempt them to renounce it; the Fear of Eternal Torments ought to be much more Powerful, to keep them ſtedfaſt to their Religion, and to deter them from the denial of it. If Fear will move us; then in all Reaſon, that which is moſt Terrible, ought to prevail moſt with us, and the greateſt Danger ſhould be moſt dreaded by us, according to our Saviours moſt friendly and reaſonable Advice, Luke 12. 4, 5. *I ſay unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear. Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath*

*power*

*power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* If there can be no doubt, which of them is moſt to be dreaded; there can be no doubt, what we are to do, in caſe of ſuch a Temptation.

I ſhall now draw ſome *Inferences* from this Diſcourſe by way of Application.

*Firſt*, If *this be a faithful ſaying, that if we be dead with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo live with him; if we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him; but if we deny him, he will alſo deny us*, The Belief of it ought to have a mighty influence upon us, to make us ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the Profeſſion and Practice of our Holy Religion. This Inference the Apoſtle makes from the Doctrine of a bleſſed Reſurrection, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as you know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* If any thing will fix Men in the Profeſſion of their Religion, and make them ſerious in the Practice of it; the Belief of a glorious Reſurrection, and of the Reward which God will then give to his Faith-

Faithful Servants, muſt needs have a very powerful Influence upon them to this purpoſe. Upon the ſame ground, the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* exhorts them *to hold faſt the Profeſſion of their Faith, without wavering; becauſe he is faithful that hath promiſed.* If we be conſtant in *the Profeſſion* and *Practice* of our Holy Religion; God will be *faithful to the Promiſe* which he hath made of *Eternal Life, to thoſe who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory and Honour and Immortality.*

If under the dark and imperfect Diſpenſation of *the Law*, Good Men ſhewed ſo much Courage and Conſtancy, for God and Religion, as we read in that long Catalogue of Heroes, *Heb.* 11. How much more ſhould *Chriſtians*, whoſe Faith is ſupported much more ſtrongly than *theirs* was, by a much clearer Evidence of another Life, and a Bleſſed Immortality, than *they* had; by more expreſs Promiſes of Divine Comfort and Aſſiſtance under Sufferings, than were made to *them*; and by the moſt Divine and Encouraging Example, of the greateſt Patience under the greateſt Sufferings,

ings, that the World ever had, in the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God, *who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God*! When we conſider this Glorious Example of Suffering, and the Glorious Reward of it; how can we *be weary and faint in our minds*! If the Saints and Apoſtles of the Old Teſtament did ſuch great things, by Virtue of a Faith, which relyed chiefly upon the Attributes and Providence of God; what ſhould not *we* do, who have the Security of Gods expreſs Promiſe, for our Comfort and Encouragement! *We* certainly have much greater Reaſon to take up our Croſs more chearfully, and to bear it more patiently, than *they* did.

*Secondly*, We ſhould always be Prepared in the Reſolution of our Minds, to Suffer for the Teſtimony of Gods Truth and a good Conſcience, if it ſhould pleaſe God at any time to call us to it. This our Saviour hath made a neceſſary Condition of his Religion, and a Qualification of a true Diſciple. *If any man will be my diſciple; let*

*let him take up his Croſs and follow me.* So that we are to reckon upon it, and to prepare for it; that if it comes, we may not be ſurprized, *as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened to us*; and may not be unreſolved what to do in ſuch a caſe. And God knows, when we may be called to it: However it is wiſe, to forecaſt it in our Minds, and to be always in a Preparation and Readineſs to entertain the worſt that may happen; that if it come, we may *be able to ſtand out in an evil day*; and if it does not come, God will accept the Reſolution of our Minds, and reward it according to the Sincerity of it. He that knows what we would have done, will conſider it, as if we had done it.

*Thirldly*, The leſs we are called *to ſuffer* for God, the more we ſhould think our ſelves obliged *to do* for him; the leſs God is pleaſed to exerciſe our *Patience*, we ſhould abound ſo much the more, in the *active Virtues* of a good Life; and our Obedience to God, ſhould be ſo much the more chearful, and we more *fruitful in every good work*. If there be no need of *ſealing* the Truth

with our *Blood*; we ſhould be ſure to *adorn* and *recommend* it by our *Lives*.

*Fourthly* and *Laſtly*, If the hopes of Immortality will bear Men up under the extremity of Suffering and Torments, and give Men Courage and Reſolution againſt all the *Terrours* of the World; they ought much more to make us victorious over the *Temptations* and *Allurements* of it. For certainly it is in Reaſon much eaſier *to foregoe Pleaſure*, than *to endure Pain*; *to refuſe* or *lay down a good Place*, for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, than *to lay down our lives* upon that Account. And in vain does any Man pretend that he will be a *Martyr* for his Religion; when he will not *rule an Appetite*, nor *reſtrain a Luſt*, nor *ſubdue a Paſſion*, nor *croſs his Covetouſneſs and Ambition*, for the ſake of it, *and in hope of that eternal life, which God that cannot lye, hath promiſed.* He that refuſeth to do *the leſs*, is not like to do *the greater*. It is very improbable, that a Man will *die for his Religon*; when he cannot be perſuaded *to live according to it*. So that by this we may

try

try the Sincerity of our Reſolution concerning *Martyrdom.* For what Profeſſion ſoever Men make, he that will not *deny himſelf* the Pleaſures of Sin, and the Advantages of this World, for Chriſt; when it comes to the puſh, will never have the Heart *to take up his Croſs and follow him.* He that cannot take up a Reſolution *to live a Saint*, hath a Demonſtration within himſelf, that he is never like *to dye a Martyr.*

A

# SERMON

Preached on

# All-Saints Day.

REV. XIV. 13.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

I will not trouble you with any nice diſpute about the Author of this Book of the *Revelation*, or the Authority

of it; tho' both theſe were ſome times controverted; becauſe it is now many Ages ſince this Book was received into the *Canon* of the Scriptures, as of *Divine Authority*, and as written by St. *John*. Nor ſhall I at this time enquire into the particular meaning of the ſeveral *Viſions* and *Predictions* contained in it. It is confeſſedly in ſeveral parts of it, a very obſcure Book; and there needs no other Argument to ſatisfie us that it is ſo, than that ſo many Learned and Inquiſitive Perſons, have given ſuch different Interpretations of ſeveral remarkable Paſſages in it; as particularly concerning *the ſlaying of the Two Witneſſes, and the number of the Beaſt.*

The words which I have read to you, tho' there be ſome difficulty about the Interpretation of ſome particular Expreſſions in them; yet in the general Senſe and Intendment of them, they are very plain, being a Solemn Declaration of *the Bleſſed State of Good Men after this Life.*

And that we may take the more notice of them, they are brought in with

with a great dreat deal of Solemn Preparation and Addreſs, as it were on purpoſe to beſpeak our attention to them: *I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.* And for the greater Confirmation of them, the ſpecial Teſtimony of *the Spirit*, is added to *the voice from Heaven*, declaring the Reaſon, why they *that die in the Lord*, are Pronounced to be in ſo happy a Condition: *Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

In the handling of theſe words, I ſhall *firſt* enquire into the particular Senſe and Meaning of them.

2. Proſecute the general Intendment of them; which I told you is to declare to us, *the Bleſſed Eſtate of thoſe that die in the Lord*, (that is) of Saints and Good Men, after they are departed this Life.

1. I ſhall enquire into the particular Senſe and Meaning of the words. To the clearing of which, nothing will conduce

conduce more, than to conſider the Occaſion of them, which was briefly this. In the *Viſions* of this and the foregoing Chapter, is repreſented to St. *John*, the great Straits that the Chriſtians, the true Worſhipers of the true God, ſhould be reduced to. On the one hand, they are Threatned with Death; or if they be ſuffered to live, they are interdicted all Commerce with Humane Society, Chap. 13. 15. *And he had power to cauſe, that as many as would not worſhip the Image of the Beaſt, ſhould be killed*: And Verſe 17. *That no man may buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark of the Beaſt.* And on the other hand, they that do Worſhip the Beaſt, are Threatned with Damnation, Chap. 14. 9, 10. *If any man do worſhip the Beaſt, the ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone.* So that whenever this ſhould happen, it would be a time of great Trial to the ſincere Chriſtians, being threatned with *Extream Perſecution* on the one hand, and *Eternal Damnation* on the other; and therefore it is added in the 12 Verſe, *Here is the Patience of the Saints: Here are they that keep the commandments*

*mandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus.* This is repreſented in St. *John's Viſions*, as the laſt and extremeſt Perſecution of the true Worſhipers of God, and which ſhould precede the final Downfall of *Babylon*. And when this ſhould happen, then he tells us, *the Patience of the Saints* would be tried to purpoſe, and then it would be ſeen, who are *faithful* to God, and *conſtant* to his Truth; and upon this immediately follows *the Voice from Heaven* in the *Text*; *And I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

The main Difficulty of the words depends upon the word ἀπάρτι, *from henceforth*; which Interpreters do variouſly refer to ſeveral parts of the *Text*. Some by changing the Accent, and reading it ἄπαρτι, would change the ſignification of the word into *omninò*; *omninò beati ſunt, they are altogether bleſſed, very happy, who dye in the Lord.* But this is altogether deſtitute of the Countenance and Warrant of any ancient Copy.

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We will then ſuppoſe that the word is ἀπάρτι, and to be rendered as we Tranſlate it, *from henceforth, from this time.* All the Difficulty, is to what part of the *Text* we are to refer it. Some refer it to the word *Bleſſed*; *Bleſſed from henceforth are the dead which die in the Lord*: As if from this time, and not before, the Souls of Good Men were, immediately after Death, admitted into Heaven; which, many of the Ancient Fathers thought, the Souls of Good Men who died before the coming of Chriſt, were not. But then this Bleſſedneſs ought to have been dated, not from the time of St. *John*'s *Viſion*, but of Chriſts Aſcenſion; according to that of St. *Ambroſe*, in the Hymn called *Te Deum*; *When thou hadſt overcome the ſharpneſs of death, thou didſt open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers.*

Others refer it to *dying in the Lord*; *Bleſſed are the dead, that from henceforth die in the Lord.* But this hath no peculiar *Emphaſis* in it; becauſe *they* were *bleſſed, that died in the Lord*, before that time.

Others

Others refer it to the words following, concerning the Teſtimony of the Spirit; *yea, from henceforth ſaith the Spirit.* All theſe Varieties agree in this Senſe in general; That ſome ſpecial Bleſſedneſs is Promiſed and Declared to thoſe who ſhould die after that time: But what that is in Particular, is not eaſie to make out.

But the moſt plain and ſimple Interpretation, and that which ſeems to be moſt ſuitable to the Occaſion of theſe words, is this; that the word ἀπάρτι, *from henceforth*, is to be referred to the whole Sentence, thus; *from henceforth bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord*; as if St. *John* had ſaid, conſidering the Extremity and cruel Circumſtances of *this laſt and ſevere Perſecution*, we may from that time forward reckon thoſe, who are already dead, (ſuppoſing that *they died in the Lord*) to be very happy; in that they did not live to ſee and ſuffer thoſe things, which will then befall the faithful Servants of God, when *the Divel ſhall come, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time.* Much in the ſame Senſe as *Solomon*, when he

*he conſidered the oppreſſions that were done under the Sun*, ſays, *Eccl.* 4. 2. That *he praiſed the dead, which were already dead; more than the living, which were yet alive*; that is, conſidering the Oppreſſions, which were ſo frequent in the World; he reckoned *thoſe* happier that were out of it, than *thoſe* who ſtill lived in it.

And as this is very agreeable to the Scope of what goes before; ſo it ſuits very well with what follows after, as the Reaſon, why thoſe Perſons are declared to be ſo happy; *yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them*; that is, that they may be at an end of their Troubles and Sufferings; and may not be tryed beyond their Strength and Patience, under *that Terrible Perſecution* which will Reign at that time; and likewiſe that they may receive the Reward of all the Good they have done, and the Evils they have ſuffered in this World; in the very ſame ſenſe, that *the righteous* are ſaid to be *taken away from the evil to come*, Eſai. 57. 1, 2. *The righteous is taken away from the evil to come, he ſhall enter into peace: They ſhall reſt in their beds, each*

*each one walking in his uprightneſs*; that is, enjoying the comfort of his Integrity and Sincerity towards God,

And now the main Difficulty being over, we ſhall need to trouble our ſelves the leſs about the other Expreſſions in the *Text*: Yet there are *Two* which I ſhall a little explain to you.

1. What is here meant by *dying in the Lord*. And this ſort of Phraſe, *in the Lord, in Chriſt, and in the name of Chriſt*, is uſed in Scripture very variouſly. In general it ſignifies, *the doing or ſuffering any thing, with relation to Chriſt, and upon his account*; and ſo *to die in the Lord*, doth moſt frequently ſignifie, *to die in the Faith of Chriſt, and the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion*. Sometimes it ſignifies *to die for his Cauſe*, and *to bear Teſtimony to his Truth*, which is therefore called *Martyrdom*, as St. *Paul* is ſaid to be δέσμιος ἐν Κυρίῳ, Eph. 4. 1. *A Priſoner in the Lord*; that is, *for his Cauſe*. So likewiſe, St. *Peter*; *If ye be reproached* ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, *in the name of Chriſt*; *happy are ye*: And 'tis probable, that the expreſſion, 1 Cor. 15. 18. *Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt*, is to be underſtood

ſtood, of *thoſe that died for his Cauſe*; becauſe it follows immediately, *if in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable*; that is, conſidering how much Chriſtians Suffered for him in this Life, they were in a moſt miſerable Condition, if there were nothing to be expected beyond it; but eſpecially, if we conſider the parallel Phraſe, 1 Theſſ. 4. 14. *So them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus*, διὰ τοῦ Ιησοῦ, *for Jeſus ſake*; that is, *them that have ſuffered Martyrdom for him, will God bring with him.* And in this ſenſe, many underſtand the Phraſe in the *Text*, as ſpoken of *Martyrs*; *Bleſſed are the dead, which die in the Lord*; that is, *for his Cauſe.* And tho' I think the Phraſe may well enough be underſtood more generally; yet I ſhall not reject this ſenſe: becauſe it is not unſuitable to the Scope and Occaſion of the words. For conſidering *that and laſt extreme Perſecution* which he had deſcribed; it was not altogether improper to pronounce thoſe happy, that had Suffered Martyrdom already, and were taken away from thoſe dreadful Calamities, which in theſe laſt days of *Antichriſt* were to fall upon the faithful Servants of Chriſt.

The

The other Expreſſion is the laſt in the *Text*, *And their works do follow them.* So we render the word ἀκολουθεῖ, which yet does moſt properly ſignify *to accompany*, or *go along with one*; and ſo indeed the Expreſſion will rather be more Emphatical, *they reſt from their labours, and their works accompany them.* But whether the word be rendred, *to follow*, or *to accompany*, the difference is not very material.

Thus you ſee what the particular ſenſe and meaning of the words probably is; *to declare the happy Eſtate of thoſe Saints or Martyrs, who were already dead, in and for the Faith of Chriſt, and ſhould not live to ſee thoſe cruel and fearful Sufferings, which ſhould afterwards come upon the Chriſtians.* But then this is grounded upon that general Truth, that *they are happy that dye in the Lord.* And this is that which I intend now to proſecute, abſtracting from the Particular occaſion, upon which theſe words were ſpoken; which brings me to the

II. Thing I propounded, and chiefly

deſigned to handle upon the occaſion of *this day*; namely, *the happy Eſtate of Good Men after they are departed out of this Life.* And in peaking to this, I ſhall confine my ſelf to *Two* Particulars, which the *Text* mentions, as the Reaſons and Grounds, why *they that dye in the Lord*, are declared to be in ſo *Bleſſed* a Condition; *yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

1. Good Men, when they are departed this Life, are freed from all the Labours and Pains they were exerciſed with in this World: *That they may reſt from their labours.*

2. They reap the Comfort and Reward of all the Good which they have done in this World: *And their works do follow them*, or rather, *go along with them*, to receive the Reward which God hath promiſed to *them, who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality.*

1. Thoſe *who die in the Lord*, are freed from the Evils and Miſeries of this Life. And this is ſo great a Felicity that

that ſome, (and thoſe who think themſelves no ſmall Philoſophers) have placed the chief Happineſs of Man in freedom from Pain and Trouble. But tho' Happineſs do not conſiſt in this alone; yet it cannot be denied to be a great part of it: For tho' ſome have been ſo phantaſtically obſtinate, as, againſt the Reaſon and Common Senſe of Mankind, to maintain his *Paradox*, that *a wiſe man may be as happy upon the Rack, or in* Phalaris *his Bull, as in the greateſt eaſe and freedom from Pain that can be imagined*; Yet Nature cries ſhame of this Hypocriſie; and there are none of thoſe *wiſe Men* they ſpeak of, were ever *ſuch Fools* as to try the Experiment, and to ſhew by their Actions, that it was indifferent to them, whether they lay'd themſelves down upon their Beds every night, or were ſtretcht upon a Rack; which yet ought to have been indifferent to them, had they believed themſelves, and really eſteemed that, which others account *Pain*, to be as Happy a Condition, as that which is commonly called *Eaſe*.

But we need not trouble our ſelves to confute ſo ſtupid a Principle, which

is confuted by *Nature*, and by every Mans *Senſe* and *Experience*. I think we may take it for granted, that Freedom from Miſery is a very conſiderable part of Happineſs; otherwiſe *Heaven* and *Hell*, if we conſider only the Torment of it, would be all one. But certainly it is no ſmall endearment of Religion, to the common Senſe of Mankind, that it promiſeth to us in the next Life, a Freedom from all the Evils and Troubles of this. And by *this* the Happineſs of Heaven is frequently deſcribed to us in Scripture. *Eſai.* 57. 2. ſpeaking of *the righteous man*; *he ſhall enter into peace: they ſhall reſt in their beds.* 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. where the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Reward of thoſe, who ſhould Suffer Perſecution for Religion, *It is a righteous thing with God*, (ſays he) *to recompence to you, who are troubled, Reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels.* And the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, frequently deſcribes the Happineſs of Chriſtians by *entring into reſt.* And *Rev.* 21. 4. the State of the *New Jeruſalem* is ſet forth to us, by deliverance from thoſe Troubles and Sorrows, which Men are ſubject to in this World;

world; *and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſt away.*

Thus it is with us in this World, we are liable to *Sorrow*, and *Pain*, and *Death*: But when we are once got to Heaven, none of *theſe* things ſhall approach us. *The former things are paſs'd away*, that is, the Evils we formerly endured, are paſt and over, and ſhall never return to afflict us any more.

And is not this a great Comfort, when we are Labouring under the Evils of this Life, and Conflicting ſorely with the Miſeries of it; that we ſhall one day be paſt all theſe, and find a ſafe Refuge and Retreat from all theſe Storms and Tempeſts: when we are Loaded with Afflictions, and even tired with the Burden of them, and ready to faint and ſink under it; to think that *there remains a reſt for us, into which we ſhall* ſhortly *enter?* How can it chooſe but be a mighty Conſolation to us, whilſt we are in this *vale of tears and troubles*, to be aſſured

that the Time is coming, when *God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there ſhall be no more ſorrow, nor crying?*

There are none of us, but are obnoxious to any of the Evils of this Life; we feel ſome of them, and we fear more: Our outward Condition, it may be, is uncomfortable; we are poor and perſecuted; we are deſtitute of Friends, or have many Enemies; we are deſpoiled of many of thoſe Comforts and Enjoyments which we once had: Our Bodies perhaps are in Pain, or our Spirits troubled; or though we have no real Cauſe of outward Trouble, yet our Souls are ill-Lodg'd, in the dark Dungeon of a Body; over-power'd with a Melancholy Humour, which keeps out all Light and Comfort from our Minds.

And is it no reviving to us, to think of *that Happy Hour*, when we ſhall find a Remedy and Redreſs of all theſe Evils at once? Of *that bleſſed place*, where we ſhall take Sanctuary, from all thoſe Afflictions and Troubles which purſued us in this World? Where Sorrow, and Miſery, and Death are perfect

Strangers

Strangers, and into which nothing that can render Men in the leaſt unhappy, can ever enter? Where our Souls ſhall be in perfect reſt and contentment, and our Bodies after a while ſhall be reſtored and reunited to our Souls; not to Cloud and Clog them as they do here, but ſo happily changed, and refined to ſuch a Perfection, that they ſhall be ſo far from giving any Diſturbance to our Minds, that they ſhall mightily add to their Pleaſure and Happineſs?

And when we are once Landed in thoſe Bleſſed Regions, what a Comfort will it be to us, to ſtand on the Shore, and look back upon thoſe rough and dangerous Seas, which we have eſcaped? How pleaſant, to conſider the manifold Evils and Calamities which we are freed from, and for ever ſecured againſt? To remember our paſt Labours and Sufferings, and to be able to defie all thoſe Temptations, which were wont to aſſault us in this World, with ſo much violence, and with too much ſucceſs?

And this is the condition of the Bleſſed Spirits above. They find a perfect ceſſation of all Afflictions and Troubles,

*they reſt from their labours.* But this is not all: For

2. They are not only freed from all the Evils and Sufferings they were exerciſed withal in this World; but they ſhall receive a Plentiful Reward of all the Good they have done in it; *their works do accompany them.* When Pious Souls go out of this World, they do not only leave all the Evils of the World behind them; but they carry along with them all the Good they have done, to reap there the Comfort and Reward of it. Juſt as on the other hand, wicked Men, when they die, leave all the good things of this World, all the Pleaſures and Enjoyments behind them; but the Guilt and Remorſe of their Wicked Lives accompany them, and ſtick cloſe to them, to Torment them there, and that there they may be Tormented for them.

Thus the Scriptures repreſent to us the different Condition of Good and Bad Men. Eſai. 3. 10, 11. *Say ye to the righteous, that it ſhall be well with him: for they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him,*

*him: for the reward of his hands ſhall be given him.* Which is many times true in *this* World; but however that happen, will moſt certainly and remarkably be made good in *the other.* And this is moſt Emphatically expreſt to us, in the Parable of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*, *Luke* 16. 25. where *the Rich Man* Petitions *Abraham* for ſome Eaſe, and *Abraham* returns him this Anſwer; *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* What a Change was here! How Comfortable to the one, and how Diſmal to the other! *Lazarus* found *reſt from* all *his Labours* and Sufferings; and his Piety and Patience *accompanied him* into the other World, and conveyed him into *Abraham*'s Boſom. Whereas *the Rich Man* was parted from all *his good things*, and the Guilt of his Sins *went along with him*, and lodged him *in the place of torments.*

But my *Text* confines me to the bright ſide of this Proſpect; The conſideration of that Glorious Recompence which Good Men ſhall receive, for the Good

Good Works which they have done in this World. Indeed the *Text* doth not expreſly ſay, that *their works ſhall be rewarded*; but that *they ſhall go along with them*, and that they are *bleſſed* upon this Account; and this implies *that they ſhall receive a ſure Reward.* For as the Apoſtle Reaſons, *God is not unrighteous to forget* our *Work and Labour of Love. Verily there is a Reward for the righteous*, as ſure as *there is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

But how Great and Glorious *that* ſhall be, I am not in any meaſure able to declare to you. It may ſuffice, that the Scripture hath aſſured us in general, that *God* is the Rewarder of Good Men, and that he will make them happy, not according to what can now enter into our narrow Thoughts, but *according to the exceeding greatneſs of his Power* and Goodneſs. If we are to receive our Reward from *God*; we need not doubt, but it will be very large, and ſuch as is every way worthy of *him* to beſtow. For *he is a great King*, and of great Goodneſs; and we may ſafely refer our ſelves to him, in confidence that he will conſider us, not according

cording to the Meanneſs of our Service, but according to the Vaſtneſs of his Treaſures, and the infinite Bounty of his Mind. If he hath promiſed to make us happy, tho' he have not particularly declared to us, wherein this Happineſs ſhall conſiſt; yet we may truſt *him that made us*, to find out ways *to make us happy*; and may believe, that he who made us *without* our Knowledge or Deſire, is able to make us happy *beyond* them both.

Only for the greater Encouragement of our Holineſs and Obedience, tho' he hath promiſed to Reward every Good Man, far beyond the Proportion of any Good he hath or can do; yet he hath declared, that theſe Rewards ſhall be proportionably greater or leſs, according to the degree of every Mans Piety and Virtue. So our Saviour tells us, that *they who are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, great ſhall be their reward in heaven*, Matt 5. 12. That there will be a difference between the Reward of *a righteous Man*, and *a Prophet*; that is, *of one who is more publickly and eminently uſeful for the Salvation of others*. And among thoſe who are *Teachers*,

*ers* of others, they that are more induſtrious, and conſequently more likely to be ſucceſsful in this Work, ſhall have a more Glorious Reward; as we are told by the Angel, *Dan* 12. 3. *And they that be Wiſe*, (or as it is in the Margin renderd, *they that be Teachers*) *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament*; *and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.* So likewiſe we find in the Parable of the *Talents*, that he that improv'd his Talent to *Ten*, was made *Ruler over Ten Cities.* And St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. ſpeaking of the Degrees of Mens Charity and Liberality towards the Poor, ſays expreſly, *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly*; *but he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully*; which by Proportion of Reaſon may be extended to the Exerciſe of all other Graces and Virtues. 1 *Cor.* 15. 41, 42. The Apoſtle there repreſents the different Degrees of Glory, which Good Men ſhall be inveſted with at the Reſurrection, by the different Glory and Splendor of the Heavenly Luminaries. *There is one glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, and another glory of the Stars*; *for one Star differeth from another Star in glory: So alſo is the Reſurrection*

*rection of the dead.* So that the more any Man ſuffers for God, and the more Patiently he ſuffers, the more Holily and Virtuouſly, the more Charitably and Uſefully he lives in *this* World; the more good Works will accompany him into the *next*, and the Greater and more Glorious Reward he may hope to receive there; which, as the Apoſtle Reaſons (in the Concluſion of that Chapter, concerning the Doctrine of the Reſurrection) ought to be a mighty Encouragement to every one of us, not only to be *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable* (that is, fix'd and reſolute in the Profeſſion and Practice of our Religion) but *abounding* likewiſe *in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know, that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Every Degree of Diligence and Induſtry, in the Work and Service of God, will moſt certainly one day turn to a happy Account. *Having therefore ſuch Promiſes, dearly Beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* The *more perfectly holy* we are here on Earth; *the more perfectly happy* we ſhall be in Heaven, and continue ſo to all Eternity.

I have now done with the *Two* Reaſons, which are here given in the *Text*, of the Happineſs that Good Men, ſuch as *die in the Lord*, ſhall be made Partakers of in another Life; becauſe *they reſt from their labours, and their works accompany them*; They are free'd from all the Evils which they ſuffer'd, and ſhall receive the Reward of all the Good they have done in this Life.

I ſhould now have proceeded to make ſome *Inferences* from this Diſcourſe; But thoſe I will reſerve for another Diſcourſe on this Subject.

All that I ſhall add at preſent, as the *Application* of what I have already ſaid, is, That this ſhould ſtir us up to a careful and zealous Imitation of thoſe *Bleſſed* Perſons deſcribed in the *Text*, *who are dead in the Lord, and are at reſt from their Labours, and whoſe Works do accompany them.* Let us imitate them, in their Faith and Patience, in their Piety and Good Works, and in their Conſtancy to God, and his Truth, which was dearer to them than their Lives.

Thus

Thus their Virtues and Sufferings are deſcribed in the *Viſions* of this Book, Chap. 13. 10. *Here is the Patience and the Faith of the Saints*; and Chap. 14. 12. *Here is the Patience of the Saints: Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jeſus*; and Chap. 12. 11. *And they overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Teſtimony; and they loved not their Lives unto the Death.*

In this Way, and by theſe Steps, all the *Saints* and *Martyrs* of all Ages, have aſcended up to Heaven, and attained to that Bleſſed State, which thy are now poſſeſſed of, after all the Evils which they Suffered in this World. *They are* now *at reſt from their labours*, and all the good *Works* which they have done, *are gon along with them*, and they are now, and ſhall for ever be, receiving the Comfort and Reward of them. And if we tread in their ſteps, by a zealous imitation of the Piety and Holineſs of their Lives, and of the Conſtancy and Patience of their Sufferings; we ſhall one day be Tranſlated into their Bleſſed Society, and made Partakers with them of

of the ſame Glorious Reward. If we *have our Fruit unto Holineſs*; our *end* ſhall be *everlaſting life*. If we *be faithful unto death*; we *ſhall receive a Crown of Life*.

Let us then, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* exhorts, Chap. 6. 11, 12. *Every one of us ſhew the ſame Diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope, unto the end: and let us not be ſlothful; but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.*

*Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlaſting Covenant, make you Perfect in every good word and work, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight.*

The Second

# SERMON

Preached on

REV. XIV. 13.

*I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

IN my Explication of theſe Words I told you, that they are in the general Senſe and Meaning of them, *a Solemn Declaration of the Bleſſed Eſtate of Good Men after this Life*; but deliver'd upon a Special Occaſion,

as is ſignified by that Expreſſion, *from henceforth*; that is, *from the time of that Viſion*, in which was repreſented to St. *John*, *the laſt and extremeſt Perſecution* of the faithful Servants of Chriſt, and which ſhould precede the fatal downfal of *Babylon*; *from that time*, *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord*; that is, conſidering the Extremity, and the cruel Circumſtances of this *laſt* and *ſevereſt* Perſecution, we may, *from that time forward*, reckon thoſe who are already dead (ſuppoſing that *they died in the Lord*,) to be very Happy; in that they do not live to ſee and ſuffer thoſe grievous things, which then will befall the Faithful Servants of God.

In my former Diſcourſe, I conſider'd the Words according to the *general intention* of them, abſtracting from the *particular occaſion*, upon which they were ſpoken, endeavouring to ſet forth *the Happy Eſtate of Good Men after this life*, from the *Two* Reaſons and Grounds mention'd in the *Text*, namely, becauſe *they reſt from their labours*, and becauſe *their works do follow*, or *accompany* and *go along with them*; which two particulars

lars conſtitute the Happineſs of the future State.

That which farther remains, and to which I now Procede, is to make ſome *Inferences* from what I have ſaid upon this Subject. And in doing this, I ſhall have an Eye on the *ſpecial occaſion* of the Words, as well as on their *general intention.* And the *Inferences* ſhall be theſe following:

*Firſt*, If thoſe that *die in the Lord* are *at reſt from their Labours* and Pains; then this *Text* concludes directly againſt the feigned *Purgatory* of the Church of *Rome*, which ſuppoſeth a great number of thoſe that *die in the Lord*, and have *obtain'd Eternal Redemption* by him from Hell, not to paſs immediately into Happineſs; but to be detain'd in the Suburbs of Hell, in great Pain and Torment, till their Souls be Purged, and the Debt of Temporary Puniſhment, to which they are liable, be ſome way or other paid off and diſcharged.

*Secondly*, Here is a mighty encouragement to Piety and Virtue, to conſi-

der, that all the good we do in this World, will *accompany* us into the other.

*Thirdly*, It is a great encouragement to Patience under the Sufferings and Perſecutions, which attend Good Men in this World; that how heavy and grievous ſoever they are at preſent, they will end with this Life, and we ſhall then *reſt from all our labours.*

*Fourthly*, The conſideration of *the* extreme Sufferings of Chriſtians in *the laſt Times*, and which perhaps are not far from us, ſhould render us very indifferent to Life, and all the enjoyments of it, ſo as even to eſteem it a particular Grace and Favour of God, to be *taken away from the Evil to come*, and by Death to prevent (if he ſees it good) *thoſe extremities* of Sufferings, which ſeem to be haſtning upon the World.

I. If thoſe *that die in the Lord are at reſt from all their labours* and pains; then this *Text* concludes directly againſt the feigned *Purgatory* of the Church of *Rome*, which ſuppoſeth a great number, yea the far greateſt part of thoſe *that die in the Lord*, and have *obtain'd Eternal*

*Eternal Redemption* by him from Hell, not to paſs immediately into Happineſs, but to be detain'd ſomewhere (they are not certain where, but moſt probably in the Suburbs of Hell) in great Pain and Torment, equal in degree to that of Hell, and differing only in Duration; I ſay, to be detained there, till their Souls be purged from the Defilements they have contracted in this World, and the Debt of Temporary Puniſhments, to which they are liable, be ſome way or other paid off and diſcharged.

They ſuppoſe indeed ſome very few Holy Men to be ſo Perfect at their departure out of this Life, that they do immediately, and without any ſtop, paſs into Heaven, becauſe they need no Purgation; and thoſe likewiſe who Suffer Martyrdom, becauſe they Diſcharge their Debt of Temporary Puniſhments here: But the generality of Chriſtians *who die in the Lord*, they ſuppoſe ſo imperfect, as to ſtand in need of being *Purged by Fire*, and accordingly that they are detained a longer or ſhorter time, as their Debt of Temporary Puniſhments is greater or leſs.

And indeed they have a very Conſiderable and Subſtantial Reaſon, to exempt as few as poſſibly they can from going to *Purgatory*; becauſe the more they put in fear of going thither, the Market of *Indulgences* riſeth the higher, and the Profit thence accruing to the Popes Coffers; and the more and greater Legacies will be left to the Prieſts, to hire their ſaying of *Maſſes*, for the delivery of Souls out of the Place of Torments: For tho' the Prayers of *Friends* and *Relations* will contribute ſomething to this; yet nothing does the Buſineſs ſo Effectually, as the *Maſſes* and Prayers of *Prieſts* to that end.

But how is it then that St. *John* ſays, that thoſe *that dye in the Lord are happy*, becauſe *they reſt from their labours*; If ſo be, the far greateſt part of thoſe *who die in the Lord*, are ſo far from *reſting from their labours*, that they enter into far greater Pains and Torments, than ever they endured in this World? And therefore *Bellarmin*, that their Doctrine of *Purgatory* may receive no prejudice from this *Text*, would have *from henceforth*, in the *Text*,

to

to be dated from *the day of Judgment*; when he ſuppoſeth the Pains of *Purgatory* will be at an end. But why, *from henceforth*, ſhould take date from *the day of Judgment*, he can give no Reaſon, but only to ſave *Purgatory* from being Condemned by this *Text*. For St. *John* plainly ſpeaks of the Happineſs of thoſe that ſhould die *after that time*, (whatever it be) which he there deſcribes; but *that time* cannot be *the day of Judgment*, becauſe none ſhall die *after that time*. Juſt thus *Eſtius* (one of their moſt Learned Commentators) deals with another *Text*, which by the generality of their Writers is urged as a plain Proof of *Purgatory*; *he ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire*: Upon which he ſays, *it is ſufficient that there is nothing in this Text againſt Purgatory*. *Sufficient*, for what? Not to prove *Purgatory*, as they generally pretend from this *Text*; but to ſave it harmleſs from it; as if we had pretended that this *Text* makes againſt it.

But there are others that make againſt it with a Witneſs. Not only the perpetual Silence of Scripture about it, when there are ſo many fair occaſions of ſpeaking of it; as in the *Parable* of the *rich*

*man* and *Lazarus*, where the future State is ſo particularly deſcribed, and yet no mention made, nor the leaſt intimation given of this *Third* State: But beſides the Silence of Scripture about it, there are ſeveral Paſſages utterly inconſiſtent with it; as namely, St. *Pauls* Diſcourſe in the beginning of the *Fifth* Chapter of the *Second* Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, where he plainly declares the Aſſurance he had, that all ſincere Chriſtians, ſo ſoon as they quit the Body, do paſs into Happineſs: *For we know*, (ſays he) *that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved; we have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* The plain meaning of which is, that ſo ſoon as we quit the One, we ſhall paſs into the Other. And this Conſideration, he tells us, made Chriſtians weary of this World, and willing to die; Ver. 2. *For in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe, which is from heaven*; and Ver. 4. *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.* But had Chriſtians believed, that the greateſt part of them, when they left the Body, were to go into *Purgatory*, to be terribly Tormented there; they would

would not have been in ſuch haſte to die; but would have protracted the time as long as they could, and have contentedly born *the burden* of *this earthly Tabernacle*, rather than to quit it, for a Condition a Thouſand times more intolerable. But St. *Paul* expreſly ſays, that Chriſtians *knew* the contrary, and that as ſoon as ever they went *out of the Body*, they ſhould be happy, and *with the Lord*; and that this gave them courage againſt the Fears of Death; Ver. 6. *Therefore we are always confident*, θαῤῥοῦντες ἐν πάντοτε, *bono igitur animo ſumus*; *Therefore we are always of good courage, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord*; and Ver. 8. *We are of good courage I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* The plain Senſe of which is, that Chriſtians were willing rather to die than to live; becauſe they knew, that ſo ſoon as they *left the Body* and departed this Life, they ſhould *be preſent with the Lord.* But now if the Doctrine of *Purgatory* be true, this whole Reaſoning of St. *Paul*, proceeds upon a groſs Miſtake; and therefore I am certain it is not true: And ſo does *the voice from Heaven* here

in

in the *Text*; *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may reſt from their labours*: For there is no Reaſon to reſtrain this general expreſſion, *that die in Lord*, only to *the Martyrs*; for tho' they are certainly included, and perhaps Primarily intended in it; yet this Phraſe comprehends all thoſe *who die in the faith of Chriſt*, and is moſt frequently ſo uſed in the New Teſtament.

But let this ſuffice to have been ſpoken of this matter; eſpecially ſince Biſhop *Fiſher*, and ſeveral of their own Learned Writers, do ſo frankly acknowledge, that their Doctrine of *Purgatory* hath no ſufficient Ground in Scripture. *Other Reaſon* I grant they have for it, which make them very loth to quit it; it is a very *Profitable* Doctrine, and therefore they have taken care to have it more abundantly confirm'd, by Apparitions of Souls from the dead, than any other Doctrine whatſoever. In ſhort, how little ſoever they can ſay for it; it is in vain to go about to perſuade them to part with it. *Demetrius the Silver Smith* argued as well as he could for his

his *Goddeſs Diana*, from *the univerſal conſent* of the World in the Worſhip of her; *the great Goddeſs Diana, whom all Aſia, and the World Worſhipeth.* But his truſty Argument to his Workmen was, *Sirs ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth, and this our Craft is in danger to be ſet at nought.*

II. Here is a mighty encouragement to Piety and Virtue, to conſider that all the good we do in this World will *accompany us* into the other. *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord; for their works accompany them.*

When we come to die, we can call nothing our own, but the Good Works which by the Grace of God we have been enabled to do in this Life. Theſe will ſtick by us, and bear us company into the other World, when we ſhall be ſtript of all other things, and forc'd to part from them, whether we will or no. Our Riches, and our Honours, our Senſual Pleaſures and Delights, will all take their leave of us, when we leave this World; nay, many times they do not accompany us ſo far as the Grave, but leave us very unkindly and

and unſeaſonably, when we have the greateſt need and uſe of them.

There is one way indeed, whereby we may ſecure our Riches, and make ſure Friends to our ſelves of them; by laying them out in Charity. By this means we may ſend them before us, and conſign them over to another World, to make way for our reception there. So our Lord aſſures us, Luke 12. 33. that *by giving Alms we provide our ſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the Heavens which faileth not*; and *Luke* 16.9. that by this way we may *make to our ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when we fail, they may receive us into everlaſting habitations. The Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, What is that? It is, what the Scripture elſewhere calls *deceitful riches*; becauſe in other ways, in which Men commonly lay them out, they turn to no certain account, but one way or other do deceive and fruſtrate our Expectation: But by diſpoſing of them in Charity, to the relief of the Poor and Perſecuted, we *make* ſure *Friends* of them, and conſign the Effects of them to our certain Benefit and Advantage in another World.

And

And as Charity, ſo likewiſe all other Graces and Virtues are *that good part which cannot be taken away from us.* All the good Actions that we do in this Life, will go with us to the Grave, and bear us company into the other World, and will ſtand by us, when we come to appear before our Judge, and through the Merits of our Bleſſed Saviour will procure for us, at the Hands of a Gracious and Merciful God, a moſt Ample and Eternal Reward.

And what an encouragement is this to Holineſs and Virtue, to conſider that it will be all our own another day, and turn to our unſpeakable advantage at our great Account! To be aſſured, that whoever ſerves God faithfully, lays up ſo much Treaſure for himſelf, which he may take along with him into the other World; and does provide for himſelf laſting Comforts and faithful Companions, which will never leave him nor forſake him; a Happineſs large as his Deſires, and Durable and Immortal as his Soul!

*Let*

*Let us* then *do all the good* that poſſibly we can, *whilſt we have opportunity*: Let us ſerve God induſtriouſly, and with all our Might, knowing that no good Action that we do ſhall be loſt and fall to the ground; that no Grace and Virtue that we Practiſe in this Life, nor any Degree of them, ſhall loſe their Reward. If we faithfully improve the Talents, which are committed to us, to our Maſters advantage; when he comes to call us to an Account, and finds that we have done ſo, we ſhall not fail to receive both his Approbation and Reward. And what a Comfort will it be to any one of us, to hear thoſe Bleſſed words from the Mouth of our Lord; *Well done thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful in a little, I will make thee ruler over much; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!* We ſhall not need to plead our Services to him, and put him in Mind of them: Our Judge himſelf will celebrate our good Deeds upon the Theatre of the World, and commemorate them to our advantage; and interpret every good Office we have done, to any of his Poor and Afflicted Members

bers, as if it had been a Kindneſs immediately done to himſelf. So our Lord repreſents the Proceedings of the great Judge and King of the World, in the great day of Recompences, Mat. 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye cloathed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee in any of theſe circumſtances; hungry, or thirſty, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and miniſtred unto thee? And the King ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Who would not be ambitious and glad to ſerve ſuch a Prince, who will ſo benignly Interpret, and ſo bountifully Reward the leaſt Service we do to him!

III. The Conſideration of this ſhould likewiſe be a great Argument and

and Support to our Patience, under all thoſe Evils and Sufferings and Perſecutions, which many times attend Good Men in this World. They are for the preſent perhaps very heavy and grievous: But there is a time ſhortly coming, when we ſhall be at eaſe, and perfectly freed from them; when we ſhall find *reſt from our labours* and ſufferings, when we ſhall *enter into peace, and reſt in our beds, every one walking in his uprightneſs*; that is, reaping the Comfort, and enjoying the Reward of his Sincerity towards God, and conſtant Suffering for his Cauſe and Truth. And therefore it was well ſaid of a Good Man, *Bleſſed be God that we are to die*; becauſe to Good Men, *that* is a certain Remedy of all the Evils of this Life, and will unqueſtionably put an end to them. The Grave is a place of Reſt, and diſcharge from all Trouble, as *Job* elegantly deſcribes it, Chap. 3. 17, 18, 19. *There the Wicked ceaſe from troubling: there the weary be at reſt. There the priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the oppreſſour. The ſmall and the great are there, and the Servant is free from his Maſter.*

So

So ſoon as we enter into the other World, we are ſecure againſt the Purſuit and Danger of all thoſe Evils which Afflicted us in this World; and nothing will remain, but the joyful remembrance of our Sufferings, and the plentiful Reward of our Conſtancy and Patience under them. And the more our Tribulations and Perſecutions have abounded, the greater will our Comfort and Happineſs then be, *which* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *is a manifeſt token*, a clear demonſtration, *of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer; ſeeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompenſe to you who are troubled, Reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels*, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 5, 6, 7.

*Fourthly*, The Conſideration of the extream Sufferings, which are to fall upon the faithful Servants of Chriſt in *the laſt times*, and which ſeem *now* to be begun in the World, ſhould make us very contented to leave this World, and glad of any fair Oportunity and Excuſe, to take our leave of it, and to

be out of the reach and danger of thoſe violent and *more than humane Temptations*, with which our Faith and Conſtancy may be aſſailed: Nay, to eſteem it a particular Grace and Favour of God to us, to be *taken away from the Evil to come*, and to prevent (if God ſees it good) thoſe Extremities of Sufferings which are coming upon the World.

Theſe ſeem now to be begun in ſome part of it: *They* in our Neighbour Nation have *a bitter Cup* put into their hands; *a Cup of Aſtoniſhment* to all thoſe that hear of it. Whether this be *that laſt and extream Perſecution* ſpoken of here by St. *John*, I ſhall not pretend poſitively to determine. It is plainly diſtinguiſh'd in the *Viſions*, from *that* under *the firſt Beaſt*, deſcribed *Rev.* 13. from Verſe the firſt, to Verſe 11. And Chap. 17. there is a deſcription of *the Beaſt upon which the woman ſitteth, on whoſe forehead is a name written*, **Myſtery, Babylon the Great:** And *this Beaſt* is there ſaid to have *ſeven heads and ten horns*, which are thus explained by St. *John*, Chap. 17. 9, 10. And *here is the Mind which hath Wiſdom*;

*Wiſdom; the ſeven Heads are ſeven Mountains upon which the Woman ſitteth; and there are ſeven Kings*, that is, (as is generally agreed by Interpreters) a ſucceſſion of ſeven Governments: And Verſe 12, 13, 14. *And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt are ten Kings, which have received no Kingdoms as yet; but receive power as Kings one hour with the Beaſt. Theſe have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the Beaſt; and ſhall make war with the Lamb.* And Verſe 18. *And the woman which thou ſaweſt, is that great City which reigneth over the Kings of the earth.*

So that *this Beaſt* is plainly *the Roman Empire*; and *the Woman that ſitteth upon her*, is *the great City* ſtanding upon *ſeven mountains, which reigneth over the Kings of the earth*; which can be no other than *Rome*, as is agreed by Interpreters on all ſides. *Bellarmine* (*l. 2. c. 2. de Rom. Pontif.*) confeſſeth that St. *John* in *the Revelations* every where calleth *Rome, Babylon*, as *Tertullian* (ſaith he) hath noted, and as is plain from Chap. 17. where *Babylon* is ſaid *to be ſeated on ſeven mountains*, and *to have dominion over the Kings of the*

*earth*: There being no other City than *Rome*, which in the time of St. *John had dominion over the Kings of the earth*; and that *Rome* was built upon *ſeven hills* is famous. Thus much *Bellarmine* acknowledgeth, conſtrained by the Force of Truth; and for another ſmall Reaſon; namely, becauſe St. *Peter* writes his firſt Epiſtle from *Babylon*, by which if *Rome* be not meant, they have no Proof from Scripture, that St. *Peter* was ever there.

Indeed they of the Church of *Rome* would have it to be only *Rome Pagan*. But that cannot be; becauſe *this Beaſt*, after *his laſt head was wounded to death*, and *his deadly wound was healed*, *had power given him to continue two and forty Months*, or (as it is elſewhere expreſt,) 1260 *days*; that is, in the Prophetick Stile, ſo many Years; and likewiſe becauſe it was not to begin till *the Ten Kingdoms*, into which the *Roman* Empire upon its diſſolution was divided, were ſet up; which was not till after the *Weſtern* Empire was Overthrown and Deſtroyed by the *Goths* and *Vandals*. And Laſtly, becauſe this is *that Rome* or *Babylon*, which ſhould finally

*be*

*be deſtroyed*, and *caſt as a Milſtone into the bottom of the Sea*, never to riſe again; which is yet to come. And of *this Beaſt* it is ſaid, that he ſhould *make War with the Saints, and overcome them*, Chap. 13. Ver. 7. that is, that he ſhould raiſe a long and great Perſecution againſt them, which ſhould try their Faith and Patience; Ver. 10. *Here is the Patience, and the Faith of the Saints. The Beaſt* then *with Ten Horns*, muſt be *Rome*, governing *the Ten Kingdoms*, into which the *Roman* Empire was broken; and this can be nothing elſe, but *Rome Papal*, to which *the Ten Kings* are ſaid *to give their Power*, and to which they were in a moſt Servile manner ſubject for ſeveral Ages, as is plain from Hiſtory.

And to confirm this, it is very obſervable, that the Ancient Fathers generally agree, that *that which hindered the revealing of the Wicked One*, (ſpoken of by St. *Paul*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 7, 8.) was *the Roman Empire*; and *that* being removed, *the Man of Sin* or *Antichriſt* was to ſucceed in its room. I ſhall produce a few Teſtimonies to this purpoſe, but very remarkable ones. *Ter-*

*tullian* expounding what St. *Paul* means, by *him that with-holdeth* or *letteth*, hath theſe words, *Quis, niſi Romanus Status*, &c? *Who is that, but the Roman State, which being broken into Ten Kings, ſhall bring on Antichriſt?* And then *the Wicked one ſhall be revealed.* And in his *Apology* he gives this Reaſon, why the Chriſtians ſhould pray for the *Roman* Emperours, and the whole State of the Empire; *becauſe the greateſt miſchief hanging over the World, is hindred by the continuance of it.* St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaking of *that which hinders the revelation of the Man of Sin*; *this* (ſays he,) *can be no other, than the Roman Empire: for as long as that ſtands, he dares not ſhew himſelf; but upon the vacancy or ceaſing of that, he ſhall aſſume to himſelf both the Power of God and Man.* St. *Auſtin*, in his Book *de* Civit. Dei, *no Man* (ſays he) *doubts, but that the Succeſſour to the Roman Emperour in Rome ſhall be the Man of Sin*; and we know who hath Succeeded him.

But now after this, *another Beaſt* is repreſented *coming out of the Earth*; not ſucceeding in the place of the *firſt Beaſt*, but appearing during his continuance,

Ver.

Ver. 12. and he hath theſe remarkable Characters, by which he may be known.

1. He is ſaid to have *but two horns*; by which, according to the Interpretation of *the ten horns*, ſignifying *the ten Kingdoms*, into which the *Roman* Empire after its diſſolution ſhould be divided, we are in all Reaſon to underſtand *two of thoſe Kingdoms*, of which *this Beaſt*, whoever he be, ſhall be Poſſeſt.

2. He is ſaid to *be like a Lamb*, but *to ſpeak like a Dragon*; that is, to pretend and make a ſhew of great Lenity and Mildneſs, in his Proceedings; but that really he ſhall be very cruel. It ſhall be pretended, that he does all without Violence, and without Arms; but he ſhall *ſpeak as a Dragon*, that is, in Truth ſhall exerciſe great Force and Cruelty; either alluding to the Cruelty of *the Dragon*, literally ſo call'd; or perhaps prophetically pointing at *a particular ſort of Armed Souldiers*, called by that name *of Dragons*, or, as we according to the *French* Pronunciation call them, *Dragoons*.

3. He ſhall ariſe during the continuance of *the firſt Beaſt*, and engage in his Cauſe; but *the firſt Beaſt* ſhall only ſtand by and look on, Ver. 12. *and he exerciſeth all the Power of the firſt Beaſt, before him, and cauſeth the earth and them that dwell therein, to Worſhip the Beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed*; plainly declaring, that *this Perſecution* ſhould not immediately ariſe from *the firſt Beaſt*, which is ſaid *to come out of the Sea*, which in this Prophecy denotes *the State Eccleſiaſtical*; but from *the ſecond Beaſt*, which *comes out of the Earth*, and denotes *the Temporal Power*. But yet all this ought to be acted in the Sight of *the firſt Beaſt*, and in his behalf, *to compel Men to Worſhip him.*

4. That he ſhall be remarkable for cauſing Fire to come down from Heaven to Earth, in a wonderful manner, to the great Terrour and Amazement of Men; Ver. 13. *And he doth great wonders; ſo that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth, in the ſight of men.*

5. That

5. That he ſhould interdict all thoſe, who would not Worſhip *the Beaſt*, all Commerce with Humane Society, the Exerciſe of Civil Trades and Profeſſions; Ver. 17. *And he cauſeth, that no man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark of the Beaſt.*

*Sixthly* and *Laſtly*, (which ſeems to be the moſt Peculiar and Characteriſtical Note of all the reſt,) that *his Number* ſhould be 666. that is, (as moſt of the Ancients underſtand it,) that the *Numeral Letters* of a certain *Word* or *Name*, ſhould, being computed, amount to *that Number*. And it is expreſly ſaid to be *the Number of a Man.* Ver. 18. *Let him that hath underſtanding count the Number of the Beaſt; for it is the Number of a Man.* And in the Verſe before, it is ſaid to be *the Number of his Name.*

Now to whom all theſe Characters do agree, and eſpecially the laſt, concerning *the Number of his Name*, I ſhall not preſume to conjecture; much leſs poſitively to determine, whether he be now in being; becauſe

it

it is ſaid to require a particular Wiſdom and Underſtanding to find it out. *Here is Wiſdom; let him that hath Underſtanding count the Number of the Beaſt.* However the Event, when the thing is fully accompliſht, will clearly diſcover it. Thus much is certain, that *this extream Perſecution*, whenever it ſhall be, will forerun the Final Deſtruction of *Babylon*, which will not then be far off. And concerning *this* it is that St. *John* ſpeaks, *ch.* 14. 12. when he ſays, *Here is the Patience of the Saints, here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jeſus.* And then he immediately adds, as it is in the *Text*, *And I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write; Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do accompany them.* Thus much may ſuffice to have been ſpoken to this *Text.*

A

# SERMON

Preached on

# All-Saints Day.

Luke XI. 49, 50, 51.

*Therefore alſo ſaid the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets and Apoſtles, and ſome of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute: That the blood of all the Prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this Generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the Altar and the Temple: Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be required of this Generation.*

THE latter part of this Chapter is a very ſharp, but juſt *Invective*, made by our Saviour againſt

againſt the Hypocriſie of the *Scribes and Phariſees*, of which he gives many inſtances; and this among the reſt for one, that they pretended a great Honour and Reſpect for the Righteous Men, and Prophets of former Ages, whom their Fathers had Perſecuted and Slain; but yet were of the very ſame Spirit and Temper, and as ready to Perſecute Good Men, as their Fathers were. They raiſed indeed ſtately Monuments to the Memory of thoſe Saints and Martyrs, and adorned them with great Art and Coſt, and it is likely made a great Shew of Eſteem and Veneration for them: But all this while they were of the ſame diſpoſition with their Fathers, and bare the ſame implacable Hatred and Malice againſt the Prophets and Righteous Men who then lived among them, (yea againſt *that great Prophet*, whom God had ſent into the World, *Jeſus the Son of God*,) which their Fathers did againſt the Good Men of *their* Times. And tho' they diſclaimed the Wickedneſs and Cruelty of their Fathers, with never ſo much Zeal and Vehemency; yet for all that, they were ready to do the ſame things. Now this was ſo groſs and odious a piece of Hypocriſie

Hypocriſie in them, that our Saviour doth with great Reaſon denounce ſo ſevere a Wo againſt them: *Wo unto you; for ye build the Sepulchres of the Prophets, and your Fathers killed them. Truly ye bear Witneſs, that ye allow the deeds of your Fathers; For they indeed killed them, and ye build their Sepulchres.* And then it follows; *Therefore alſo ſaid the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets and Apoſtles, and ſome of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute: That the blood of all the Prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the Altar and the Temple.*

There are conſiderable Difficulties in both theſe Paſſages. As to the former, *Wo unto you; for ye build the Sepulchres of the Prophets, and your Fathers killed them. Truly ye bear Witneſs, that ye allow the deeds of your Fathers: For they indeed killed them, and ye build their Sepulchres.* The force of this Reaſoning; is at firſt ſight not eaſie to be diſcern'd; and therefore Expoſitors have gone ſeveral ways to explain it.

Some

Some comparing this with the parallel Place in St. *Matthew's* Goſpel (Ch. 23. 29.) will not have our Saviour to mean, that by *building the Sepulchres of the Prophets* they expreſs'd *their approbation of their Fathers killing them.* They did indeed teſtifie by their uſage of *the Righteous Men* that liv'd amongſt themſelves, that they were of the very ſame Temper and Spirit, which their Fathers had been of; and that they would have done juſt as their Fathers did, if they had been in the ſame Circumſtances with their Fathers; So that *they were Witneſſes to themſelves* (as it is in St. *Matthew*) *that they were the Children of them which killed the Prophets*; They own'd themſelves *their Children* by *Deſcent*, and their Actions *Witneſſed* that they were *their Children* alſo in *Reſemblance*; nay, (as it is there farther intimated) they ſeem'd reſolv'd *to fill up the Meaſure of their Fathers*: tho' all this while they pretended not to approve their Fathers Behaviour; and therefore whilſt they were *building the Tombs of the Prophets, and garniſhing the Sepulchres of the Righteous, they ſaid, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would*

*not*

*not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets.* And the Interpreters that go this way do accordingly render theſe words of St. *Luke*; not as they are in our Tranſlation, *ye bear Witneſs that ye allow the deeds of your Fathers*: But, *ye bear Witneſs, and ye allow* (or, *are well pleas'd with*) *the deeds of your Fathers*; that is, ye own that they were your Fathers, who did theſe things; and tho' ye do not *in words allow* what they did, yet your *inward Tempers and Diſpoſitions* (whether you know it or no) are the very ſame with theirs, which you too plainly *teſtifie* by your *Actions*; ſo that when *you build the Sepulchres of the Prophets*, you only expoſe the Deceitfulneſs and Hypocriſie of your Hearts, your *Pretences* and your *Actions* directly contradicting each other. Thus ſome Expoſitors give the Senſe of this Paſſage.

But Others think, that our Saviour intended ſomewhat more, in St. *Luke*, namely, to retort upon them the Honour which they ſeem'd to do to the Prophets, in *building their Sepulchres*, as *an Argument that they rejoyced in their Death*; ſeeing they were ſo well content

tent to be at the Charge of a Monument for them; like *Herod*, who when he had Murdered *Ariſtobulus*, made a Magnificent Funeral for him; or as the *Roman* Hiſtorians ſay of *Caracalla*, tho' he hated all Good Men, whilſt they were alive, yet he would pretend to Honour them, when they were dead. This Some think our Saviour intended in theſe Words, *Truly ye bear Witneſs, that ye allow the deeds of your Fathers: For they indeed killed them, and ye build their Sepulchres*; As if he had ſaid, Hereby ye teſtifie, that ye allow and like very well what your Fathers did to the Prophets. According to which latter Expoſition, there ſeems to be more Force and greater Sharpneſs in our Saviour's Reproof; as not only charging them with their ill uſage of the Righteous Men of their own Times; but moreover making them, by *their building the Tombs, and garniſhing the Sepulchres* of the Antient Prophets, to become as it were *Acceſſories* to the Murder of them.

But leaving this Digreſſion, I now proceed to that which I primarily intended, namely, *firſt* to explain the following Words, which I have choſen

as

as my preſent Subject, and *then* to make ſome *Obſervations* upon them.

*Therefore alſo ſaid the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets and Apoſtles, and ſome of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute; that the blood of all the Prophets which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this Generation; from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the Altar and the Temple: Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be required of this Generation.*

There are *Three* conſiderable Difficulties in the Words, which I ſhall endeavour to explain to you.

I. What is here meant by *the Wiſdom of God.*

II. Who this *Zacharias* was, here mentioned by our Saviour; *from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, who periſhed between the Altar and the Temple.*

III. In what Senſe, and with what Reaſon and Juſtice it is here threatned, *that the blood of all the Prophets and righ-*

*teous men, ſhed from the foundation of the world, ſhould be required of that Generation.*

I. What is here meant by *the Wiſdom of God: Therefore alſo ſaid the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets and Apoſtles*, &c. In St. *Matthew* our Saviour ſpeaks this in his own Name, *wherefore behold, I ſend unto you Prophets*: For which Reaſon Some think, that by *the Wiſdom of God*, our Saviour here deſigned *himſelf*; as if he had ſaid, therefore *I, who am the Wiſdom of God*, declare unto you. But this is not very probable, our Saviour no where elſe in the Goſpel ſpeaking of himſelf in any ſuch Stile; tho' St. *Paul* calls him *the Power of God*, and *the Wiſdom of God*. Others think that our Saviour here refers to ſome Prophecy of the Old Teſtament, to this purpoſe; *therefore the Wiſdom of God hath ſaid*, that is, *the Holy Spirit of Wiſdom*, which inſpired the Prophets in the Old Teſtament. But this conceit is utterly without ground; for we find no ſuch Paſſage, nor any thing to that Senſe, in any of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament.

But the moſt plain and ſimple Interpretation is this, *therefore hath the Wiſdom of God ſaid*, that is, *the moſt wiſe God hath determined* to ſend among you ſuch Meſſengers and Holy Men, and I foreſee that ye will thus abuſe them, and thereby bring Wrath and Deſtruction upon your ſelves. And whereas our Saviour ſays in St. *Matthew*, *behold I ſend unto you Prophets*; it is very probable, he ſpeaks in God's Name, and that it is to be underſtood, *behold, ſays God, I ſend unto you.* And this Phraſe of *the Wiſdom of God*, for *the moſt Wiſe God*, is very agreeable to other Forms of Speech, which we meet with in the *Jewiſh* Writers; as, *Dicit norma judicii, the rule of Judgment ſays*, that is, *the moſt Juſt and Righteous God*; which ſerves very well to explain the Phraſe in the *Text*, *Therefore ſaith the Wiſdom of God, I will ſend them Prophets and Apoſtles.*

By *Apoſtles* is here meant, all ſorts of *Divine Meſſengers*: For ſo St. *Matthew* expreſſeth it, *I ſend unto you Prophets, and wiſe men, and Scribes*; that is, ſeveral Holy and Excellent Men, endowed with all ſorts of Divine Gifts; *Prophets, and wiſe men, and Scribes*, which were the moſt

glorious and admired Titles among the *Jews.*

*And some of them they shall slay and persecute.* St. *Matthew* expresseth it more particularly, *some of them ye shall kill and crucifie*; as it was afterwards fulfilled in the two *James's*, and *Stephen*, who were slain by them; and in *Simon* the Son of *Cleophas*, and before him in *Jesus the Son of God*, who were Crucified; and *some of them ye shall scourge in your Synagogues*, as we read they did to *Peter* and *John*; and *persecute them from City to City*, as they did *Paul* and *Barnabas*. The sending of these Messengers of God among the *Jews*, and this ill usage of them, the All-wise and All-knowing God had determined and foreseen.

II. Who this *Zacharias* was, here mentioned by our Saviour. And there are so many of them, (no less than *Four* of this name) to whom it may with some probability be applyed, but especially to *Two* of them, that it is very hard to determine which of them our Saviour means. Three *Zachariases* are mention'd in

in Scripture, and one more in the History of *Josephus*.

There was *Zacharias* the Father of *John the Baptist*; but whose *Son* he was, we do not read; and tho' of his Death the Scripture is silent, yet there are two Traditions about it; one, that he was slain by *Herod's* Officers, because he would not tell where his Son, *John the Baptist* was, when *Herod* sent for him. But the Credit of this relys upon very doubtful Authors. The other is mentioned by several of the Fathers, and the substance of it is briefly this; that there being a Place in the *Temple*, where the Virgins by themselves used to pray, *the Virgin Mary* coming to that Place to pray among the Virgins, was forbidden, because she had had a Child; and that *Zacharias*, for maintaining her Virginity, was set upon and *killed between the Temple and the Altar*. But this Tradition is rejected by St. *Jerome*; and I doubt there is little ground for it.

*Zacharias*, one of the lesser Prophets, was *the Son of Barachias*, which agrees so far with St. *Matthew's* description of him: But there is no mention in Scrip-

ture that he was *ſlain*; nor could he well be *in the Temple*, which was but building in his Time; tho' the Author of the *Targum* ſays, that *Zacharias* the Son of *Iddo* was *ſlain* by the Jews *in the houſe of the Lord's Sanctuary*, on the day of the Propitiation; becauſe he admoniſht them not to do Evil before the Lord. Now *Zacharias, the Son of Barachias*, was the Grand-Son of *Iddo*; but yet, I think, this was only lapſe of Memory, and that he means *Zachary* in the *Chronicles*, who was ſlain by *Joaſh*.

And *He* is the Third *Zacharias* I mention'd, 2 *Chron.* 24. 21. who, as he was reproving the People *for tranſgreſſing the Commandment of the Lord, was ſtoned with ſtones at the Commandment of the King, in the court of the houſe of the Lord.* And this our Saviour ſeems more particularly to reflect upon, immediately after the *Text*; *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that ſtoneſt the Prophets*, &c. Now *this* one would think was certainly the Perſon intended by our Saviour, and fit to be mentioned with *Abel, whoſe blood* is ſaid *to have cried to the Lord.* For of *Zacharias* it is likewiſe ſaid, that *when he died, he ſaid, the Lord look upon it*,

*it, and require it.* And *Druſius* cites a Jewiſh Writer, ſpeaking thus by way of complaint againſt the Jewiſh Nation; *becauſe in the midſt of thee fell the Prieſts of the Lord, and his Prophets, and becauſe before the Holy Temple, in the midſt of thee, was ſlain the Godly and Righteous Prophet Zacharias, who lay unburied, nor did the Earth cover his blood, but to this day it goes up and ſpeaks in the midſt of thee.* So that none could have been more fit to have been joyn'd with *Abel*, in this reſpect.

But as probable as this looks, there are Two very great Objections againſt it. One is, that St. *Matthew* calls the *Zacharias* ſpoken of by our Saviour, the Son of *Barachias*; whereas this *Zacharias* ſlain by *Joaſh*, was the Son of *Jehoiada*: And tho' it be very conſiderable, which St. *Jerome* obſerves, that in the *Hebrew*, or *Nazarene* Goſpel, it is *Zacharias* the Son of *Jehoiada*; yet it is hard to rely upon that, againſt all the *Greek* Copies. But a more difficult Objection, in my opinion, is, that our Saviour ſeems to deſign to mention the Two Extreams, the Firſt and Laſt Righteous Man that was ſlain,

and between them two comprehended the Good Men of all Ages, that were Perſecuted and Slain; and if ſo, then that *Zacharias* in the *Chronicles*, who was ſlain ſo long before, can by no means be the Perſon.

There is yet a Fourth *Zacharias*, mentioned by *Joſephus*, *Lib.* 4. the Son of *Baruch* (which is probably enough the ſame Name with *Barachias*,) who was the laſt remarkable Good Man that was ſlain, immediately before the Siege of *Jeruſalem*; and that, as *Joſephus* tells us, in the midſt of the *Temple*; which agrees with our Saviour's deſcription of it, *between the Altar and the Temple*; not the *Altar* of Incenſe, but of burnt Offerings, which was in the outward Court, before the aſcent to the *Temple*. So that *Grotius* thinks *this* was the Man intended by our Saviour, yet ſo that he does both allude to the Hiſtory of the former *Zacharias*, and foretell the death of this. And there is but one Objection againſt this; that our Saviour ſpeaks of this as already paſt, *whom you have ſlain*; whereas this *Zacharias* was not ſlain till after our Saviour's death. But I think that a ſatisfactory Anſwer may be given to this; (*viz.*)

(*viz.*) that our Saviour foretelling thoſe future Perſecutions, which ſhould fill up the Meaſure of their ſins, and bring final Deſtruction upon them, he ſpeaks of this as already paſt; becauſe before that Deſtruction ſhould come upon them, it would be true, *they had ſlain him*: So that ſpeaking of the Vengeance coming upon them, well might he ſay, *that upon them ſhould come the blood of all the righteous men, from Abel to Zacharias, whom they had ſlain*, &c.

The *Third* Difficulty remains, and that is, in what Senſe, and with what Reaſon and Juſtice it is here threatned, *that the blood of all the Prophets and Righteous Men, ſhed from the foundation of the World, ſhould be required of that Generation.* Some underſtand this more ſtrictly; they ſhould be charged with it, and formally puniſht for it, becauſe in imitating their cruel Predeceſſors, they ſhould be guilty of all their Cruelty. But there is no neceſſity of this: all that our Saviour ſeems to intend, is this, that their Puniſhment, in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſhould be ſo horrible, as if God had *once for all* arraigned them of all the Righteous Blood that ever had

had been ſhed in the World, and brought the Puniſhment of it upon them; tho' in Truth the Puniſhment did not exceed the deſert of *their own* Sins. And if this be the meaning of it, there is nothing Harſh and Unreaſonable in it. And thus I have explain'd, as well as I can, the ſeveral Difficulties in the *Text*. I ſhall make Two or Three Obſervations from the main Scope and Deſign of it, and ſo conclude.

I. That it hath been the Lot of Holy and Righteous Men, in moſt Ages of the World, to meet with very bad uſage, to be *Perſecuted and Slain*. The Devil began this work early. When there were but three Men in all the World, and two of them Brethren; the one *ſlew* the other, *becauſe he was more righteous*, and ſerved God better than he did. And this trade hath continued, and been practiſed more or leſs, in moſt Ages and Generations of the World, as might be deduced through the Hiſtory of the Old and New Teſtament, and of moſt Ages ſince: *though the rod of the wicked hath not always abode upon the back of the righteous*, leſt at laſt Piety ſhould

ſhould be quite diſcouraged, and *the faithful fail from among the Children of men.* The People and the Church of God have had many Intervals of Peace and Proſperity; and ſometimes for a long continuance, the favour and countenance of Authority, and the Powers of the World, and the Laws of Nations on their ſide.

But yet there is a continual *enmity between the Seed of the Woman, and the Serpent, between the righteous and the wicked, between thoſe that ſerve God, and thoſe that ſerve him not*; becauſe their ways are contrary one to another, and quite of another faſhion, their Principles and Practices do contradict and claſh with one another; the Virtues of good men are a continual upbraiding of the bad, a living reproof and reproach to them; ſo that it is no wonder, that evil men do ſo violently hate and perſecute the good, and do by all means endeavour to remove out of the way thoſe who are ſo oppoſite and offenſive to them.

II. We may obſerve likewiſe hence, how

how great a Sin they are guilty of, who perſecute the righteous, and how terrible a Vengeance from God waits on them. Particular Examples of this have been in all Ages: but as the guilt of this Sin never went higher, than at this time, foretold by our Saviour; when God *ſent* to the *Jews* ſuch *Prophets, and Wiſe-men, and Scribes*, and ſuch a Number of them, as never upon any occaſion were ſent unto the World, and they uſed them in that bloody and barbarous manner; no wonder, if the Vengeance that came upon them was ſuch as never had been before; and if, after they had *filled up the meaſure* of their ſins, by *crucifying the Lord Jeſus*, and *perſecuting his Apoſtles*, and *ſtoning* and *killing* all *the Prophets* that were ſent unto them, *the wrath of God came upon them to the utmoſt*, and ſuch a terrible deſtruction from the Lord, as never befell any People; inſomuch that our Saviour, upon the foreſight and mention of it, forty years before it happen'd, could not but *weep over them*, and expreſs himſelf in thoſe compaſſionate words, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets*,

*phets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; but ye would not! Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate.*

III. From this whole Paſſage of our Saviour, which I have been explaining to you, we may learn, how vain it is for men to pretend to honour *the dead Saints*, when they perſecute *the living*. This was the great hypocriſie of *the Scribes and Phariſees* among the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; and is at this day of the Rulers and Governours of the *Roman* Church among us *Chriſtians*; nay *they* exceed *the Scribes and Phariſees*, not only in their veneration of *the ancient Saints and righteous men*, but alſo, if it be poſſible, in their malice and cruelty towards the living. For they not only build coſtly Monuments to their Memory, which was the utmoſt *the Scribes and Phariſees* did; but they honour them with Shrines and rich Offerings, with Prayers and Vows to them, more frequent than to Almighty God himſelf, and our bleſſed Saviour: but then they hate and perſecute

ſecute *the living*, with as great violence and cruelty, as ever was uſed by any part of Mankind towards one another. 'Tis true they do it under the notion of *Hereſie*; and ſo did the *Scribes and Phariſees* too, as St. *Paul* witneſſeth, *After the way which ye call Hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets.* So they call us *Hereticks*; tho' we receive and believe all that is written in the Holy Scriptures, only rejecting their Additions, whereby they *would make the Commandment of God of none effect.* And as *Rome* is parallel with *Jeruſalem* in many other reſpects; ſo eſpecially in the bloody Perſecution of righteous men: and as *Jeruſalem* is charged by our Saviour with *the blood of all the Prophets and righteous men* of all Ages; ſo St. *John* in the *Revelation* ſays of *Rome*, that *in her was found the blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth*, *ch.* 18. 24. Which is no leſs true of *Rome Chriſtian*, than of *Rome Pagan*. In all the Churches and Religions in the World, and perhaps in *Rome Pagan* her ſelf, hath not

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ſo much innocent Blood been ſhed, as in *Rome Chriſtian* and *Catholick*, and that *under a pretence of Religion*: and no doubt there is a day a coming, when ſhe ſhall be called to a heavy Account for theſe things, *when the Heavens ſhall rejoyce over her, and the Holy Angels and Prophets, becauſe God hath avenged them on her.*

A

# SERMON

Preached on

*November* 5. 1682.

ROM. X. 2.

*I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God; but not according to knowledge.*

THere is nothing more commonly cryed up, than *zeal in Religion*; and yet there is nothing in which Men do more frequently and fatally miſtake and miſcarry, and in the Expreſſions and Effects whereof Men

ought to govern themſelves with more Care and Caution. To ſpeak the truth, *Zeal* is, as all other Paſſions are, in its own Nature indifferent, and of it ſelf neither Good nor Bad; but according to the Object and Degree of it: for *Zeal* is nothing elſe, but *an earneſt Concernment for, or againſt ſomething, and a violent Purſuit and Proſecution of it.* For if it be applyed to a right Object, ſo as we be earneſtly concerned for things that are unqueſtionably Good, and againſt things that are unqueſtionably Evil; and in a due Degree; that is, if the Expreſſion of it be Proportionable to the leſs or greater Good or Evil of things; then it is a commendable Quality or Virtue: But if it be wrong placed, and we be earneſtly concerned for that which is Evil, and againſt that which is Good, or about things which are of an indifferent, or doubtful Nature, as to the Good and Evil of them; or if we notoriouſly exceed in the Degree of it, being more zealouſly concerned about things, than they deſerve, and zealouſly concerned about leſſer things, to the prejudice of greater; in any of theſe Caſes, it is ſo far from being a Virtue, that it is

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a Vice, of a moſt pernicious and miſchievous conſequence, and many times hath as bad Effects, as can proceed from the worſt Principle or Diſpoſition of Mind.

It is ſometimes uſed in a good Senſe; but it is, when it is applyed to the beſt things, in which the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Men is concern'd, to the great and unqueſtionable Duties of Religion. As Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Place of his Publick Worſhip, in oppoſition to Profaneneſs, *John* 2. 17. *The Zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.* For an earneſt deſire of thoſe Gifts, whereby we are to Edifie the Church, 1 Cor. 12. 31. *But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*, ſo we render the words; *be zealous of the beſt gifts*, ſo it is in the *Greek*. For a Forwardneſs and Readineſs to relieve the Neceſſities of the Saints, 2 Cor. 9. 2. *I know the forwardneſs of your minds, and your zeal hath provoked very many.* And to the ſame purpoſe is that Expreſſion, Tit. 2. 14. *Zealous of good works.* And then for a Zeal for the Salvation of Mens Souls, 2. Cor. 11. 2. *I am zealous of you with a godly zeal.*

But the word is much more frequently in Scripture uſed in a bad Senſe, for a malicious and furious Rage, againſt the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, *Acts* 5. 17, 18. *Then the high Prieſt, and they that were with him, were filled with indignation,* (the word is *Zeal*) *and laid their hands on the Apoſtles, and put them in priſon.* And, Chap. 13. 45. it is ſaid, *The Jews were fill'd with Zeal, and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming.* And, Chap. 17. 5. *The Jews which believed not, moved with Zeal, gathered a company, and ſet all the City in an uproar.*

'Tis frequently reckoned amongſt *the works of the fleſh,* and mentioned in the company of the greateſt Vices and Crimes; Wrath, Contention, Diviſion, Sedition, Murthers, Tumults, Confuſions. *Rom.* 13. 13. *Let us walk honeſtly as in the day, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and zeal.* 1 Cor. 3. 3. *Whereas there is among you zeal, and ſtrife, and diviſions; are ye not carnal?* 2 Cor. 12. 20. *Leſt there be debates, zeal, wrath, ſtrife.* Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *The works of the fleſh are manifeſt,* among which

which the Apoſtle reckons *hatred, variance, zeal, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murthers.* St. *James* calls it *a bitter zeal,* Jam. 3. 14, 15, 16. *But if ye have bitter zeal and ſtrife in your hearts; glory not, and lye not againſt the truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above; but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. For where zeal and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work.* By which it appears, that *zeal* moſt frequently goes under a bad Name and Character in Scripture; *zeal,* I mean, *in matters of Religion*; for of *that* moſt of the Texts I have mentiond ſpeak; and this is that which St. *Paul* means here in the *Text,* by *a zeal of God,* that is, *a zeal about Religion, and divine things. I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God; but not according to knowledge.*

In which words, the Apoſtle, being deſirous to ſay the beſt he could of his Countrymen, *the Jews,* he commends *the good meaning* of their *zeal,* and blames the *ill conduct* of it, *I bear them record,* μαρτυρῶ αὐτοῖς, *I give this teſtimony on their behalf, that they have a zaal of God*; that is, that by all this fierceneſs againſt

the Chriſtian Religion, they intend the honour of God, and think they do him ſervice: but yet this *Zeal* is greatly to be condemned; becuaſe it is *a miſtaken and miſguided zeal*, not at all directed as it ſhould be; *they have a zeal of God; but not according to knowledge.*

From which words I ſhall take into conſideration theſe *Three* things.

I. What are the Qualifications and Properties of *a Zeal according to knowledge.*

II. By what Marks and Characters, we may know *that zeal*, which here, and elſewhere in Scripture is condemned, as *not being according to knowledge.*

III. How far the doing of any thing, out of *a Zeal for God*, doth mitigate and extenuate the Evil of it. For when the Apoſtle here teſtifies concerning the *Jews*, that they had *a zeal of God*; he ſpeaks this in favour of them, and by way of mitigation of their Faults. When I have handled theſe

*Three*

*Three* Particulars, I ſhall apply my Diſcourſe to the preſent Occaſion of *this day.*

I. What are the Qualifications and Properties of *a zeal according to knowledge.* I ſhall mention theſe *Three.*

1. That our Zeal be right, in reſpect of its Object.

2. That the Meaſure and Degree of it be proportioned to the Good or Evil of things, about which it is converſant.

3. That we purſue it by lawful ways and means.

1. That our Zeal be right, in reſpect of its Object; I mean, that thoſe things which we are zealous for, be certainly and conſiderably Good; and that thoſe things which we are zealous againſt, be certainly and conſiderably Evil. A miſtake in any of theſe quite marrs our Zeal, and ſpoils the Virtue of it: And tho' it be never ſo much intended for God, it is not at all

pleaſing and acceptable to him; becauſe it is a blind and ignorant and miſtaken Zeal: and the hotter, the worſe; it is not an heavenly fire, *that comes down from above*; but it is like the fire of Hell, Heat without Light. If we miſtake Good and Evil, and be zealouſly concerned, againſt that which is Good, or for that which is Evil; the greater our Zeal is, the greater is our Fault; and inſtead of doing God and Religion Service and Credit, we do the greateſt Miſchief and Diſhonour we can to them both: or if the thing about which our Zeal is converſant, be of a doubtful and uncertain nature; this is not properly an Object of Zeal. Men ſhould never be earneſt for, or againſt any thing, but upon clear and certain Grounds, that what we contend ſo earneſtly for, is undoubtedly Good; and that which we are ſo violent againſt, is undoubtedly Evil: if it be not, we are *zealous for we know not what*, and *that*, I am ſure, is *a zeal not according to knowledge.*

And if the thing be *certainly* Good or Evil, which we are ſo concerned about; it

it muſt alſo be *conſiderably* ſo: otherwiſe it will not warrant our being zealous about it. All Truth is Good, and all Errour Bad; but there are many Truths ſo inconſiderable, and which have ſo ſmall an influence upon Practice, that they do not deſerve our Zeal and earneſt Contention about them; and ſo likewiſe are there many Errors, and Miſtakes, of ſo ſlight and inconſiderable a Nature, that it were better Men ſhould be let alone in them, than provok'd to Quarrel and Contend about them.

Thus that great Heat that was in the Chriſtian Church, about the Time of obſerving *Eaſter*, was, in my Opinion, *a Zeal not according to knowledge.* They were on both ſides agreed in the main, which was to celebrate the Memory of our Saviour's Reſurrection: But there were different Cuſtoms about the Time, which was a matter of no ſuch conſideration, as to deſerve ſo much Heat and Zeal about it, eſpecially conſidering the uncharitable, and miſchevious Conſequences of that difference.

2. That

2. That our *Zeal* may be *according to knowledge*, the Meaſure and Degree of it muſt be proportioned to the Good or Evil of things, about which it is converſant. That is *an ignorant Zeal*, which is converſant about leſſer things, and unconcerned for greater. Such was the Zeal of the Scribes and Phariſees, who were mightily concerned about external and leſſer Matters; but took little or no care of inward Purity, and real and ſubſtantial Goodneſs; they were very careful, *not to eat with unwaſht hands, and to make clean the outſide of the cup and platter*; but then *they were full of extortion, and all unrighteouſneſs: they pay'd tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cumin; but omitted the weightier things, judgment, mercy, and fidelity*; or, as St. *Luke* expreſſeth it, *they paſt over Judgment and the love of God.*

A zealous ſtrictneſs about external Rites and Matters of difference, where there is a viſible neglect of the ſubſtantial Duties of Religion, and the great Virtues of a good life, is either a groſs Ignorance of the true Nature of Religion,

ligion, or a fulſome Hypocriſie. And ſo likewiſe is a loud and zealous outcry againſt Rites and Ceremonies, and the Impoſition of indifferent things in Religion, when Men can releaſe themſelves from the Obligation of Natural and Moral Duties, and *paſs over mercy, and juſtice, and charity.*

3. A *Zeal* that is *according to knowledge*, muſt be purſued and proſecuted by Lawful and Warrantable Means. No Zeal for God and his Glory, for his true Church and Religion; will juſtifie the doing of that which is morally and in it ſelf evil. *Will ye ſpeak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?* We do not know what belongs to the Honour of God and Religion, if we think to promote his Glory, by means ſo diſhonourable and offenſive to him. The Apoſtle pronounceth it *a Damnable Sin*, for any to charge this Doctrine upon Chriſtianity, *that evil may be done for a good end, and to promote the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 8. *As we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay, let us do evil, that good may come; whoſe damnation is juſt.*

And

And yet nothing is more frequent, than for Men, out of *a Zeal for God and Religion*, to over-look the Evil and Unlawfulneſs of the Means they uſe, for the advancing ſo good an End. This is that which hath ſanctified thoſe refined Arts of Lying and Perjury, by Equivocation, and Mental Reſervation; thoſe ſeditious ways of diſturbing the Peace of Kingdoms, by Treaſon and Rebellion, by the Excommunicating, and Depoſing of Princes, upon pretence of *Hereſie*; of Extirpating thoſe, whom they pleaſe to call *Heretick*s, by Inquiſitions, and Croiſado's, and Maſſacres; and this, not only in the opinion of private Perſons, but in the judgment of *Popes*, and of *General Councils*. I proceed in the

II. Place to ſhew by what Marks and Characters we may know the contrary *Zeal*, that which is *not according to knowledge*, which is condemned here in the *Text*, and very frequently in other Places of Scripture: and tho' *this* may be ſufficiently known by the contrary Marks and Properties (which I ſhall but briefly mention) yet to diſcover

cover it more fully, I ſhall add *One* or *Two* more very groſs and ſenſible ſigns and inſtances of it.

1. It is *a zeal without knowledge*, that is miſtaken in the proper Object of it, that calls *good evil*, and *evil good*; a zeal for groſs Errors and Superſtitions, plainly contrary either to the revelation of God's Word, or the light of Reaſon, or to common Senſe; any or all of theſe cannot be *a zeal according to knowledge*. A zeal for the Worſhip of Images, for praying to Saints and Angels, contrary to the plain Law and Word of God; a zeal for the ſacrilegious depriving of the People of half the Sacrament, contrary to our Saviour's plain Inſtitution, and the acknowledged Practice of the Catholick Church, for a thouſand years; a zeal for *that moſt abſurd* of all Doctrines that ever was taught in any Religion, I mean *the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation*, not only without any ſufficient Authority from Scripture (as is acknowledged by ſeveral of the moſt learned of the *Roman* Church) but contrary to Reaſon, and in defiance of the Senſe of all

all Mankind; a zeal for theſe, and many more like groſs Errors and Practices, cannot poſſibly be *a zeal according to knowledge.*

2. That is *a zeal without knowledge*, the degree whereof is manifeſtly diſproportion'd to the Good or Evil of things about which it is converſant; when there is in Men a greater and fiercer zeal for the Externals of Religion; than for the Vital and Eſſential Parts of it: for *the Traditions of men*; than for *the Commandments of God*: for Bodily Severities; than for the Mortification of our Luſts: for the Means of Religion; than for the End of it: a greater zeal againſt the Omiſſion and Neglect of ſome ſenſeleſs and ſuperſtitious Practices; than againſt the Practice of the groſſeſt Immoralities: and againſt the Denyers of the Doctrines of Tranſubſtantiation, and of the Pope's Infallibility, an equal, if not a greater zeal (I am ſure a more ſevere Proſecution) than againſt thoſe who deny our Saviour to be the true Meſſias, and the Son of God: this certainly is not *a zeal according to knowledge.* Nor,

3. That

3. That which is proſecuted by unlawful and unwarrantable Means. *That* cannot be *a zeal of God according to knowledge*, which warrants *the doing of Evil, that Good may come*; the violating of Truth and Faith, and of the Peace of Humane Society, for the Cauſe of the Catholick Church; and breaking the eternal and immutable Laws of God, for the advancing of his Glory. Nor,

4. An uncharitable Zeal, which is an Enemy to Peace and Order, and thinks it ſelf ſufficiently warranted to ſeparate from the Communion of Chriſtians, and to break the Peace of the Church, upon every ſcruple, and upon every fancy and conceit of unlawful Impoſitions, tho' in the moſt indifferent things; nay, upon this ſingle Point, *becauſe a thing which they acknowledge lawful, and indifferent in it ſelf, is in the Worſhip of God enjoyned by Authority*; The moſt unreaſonable Principle that I think ever was avowed among Chriſtians; not to do a thing, which otherwiſe they might do, only becauſe it is enjoyned; and to fancy, that an indifferent thing becomes

comes preſently unlawful, becauſe it is commanded by lawful Authority; and that it is a Sin to do any thing, in the Worſhip of God, which is not left to their Liberty, whether they will do it or not. This is not only *a Zeal without knowledge*; but *contrary to common Senſe*. Nor,

5. A Furious and Cruel Zeal, which St. *James* calls *a bitter*, or *a wrathful Zeal*, and which tends to *confuſion and every evil work*, which is blind with its own rage, and makes Men, as St. *Paul* ſays of himſelf, when he perſecuted the Chriſtians, *exceedingly mad* againſt all that differ from them, and ſtand in the way of their fierce and outragious Zeal.

6. *And laſtly*, A Zeal for ignorance, is moſt certainly *not a zeal according to knowledge*; and *this* is *a Zeal* peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, by ſuch ſtrict Laws to forbid People the uſe of the Holy Scriptures in a known Tongue; nay not ſo much as to allow them to underſtand what they do in the Service of God; to require them to be preſent

preſent at their Publick Prayers, and to joyn with them in them, without letting them know the meaning of them; to pretend to teach them, by reading Leſſons to them in an unknown Tongue; and all this under pretence of increaſing their Devotion; as if the leſs Men underſtand of the Service of God, the more they would be affected with it, and edified by it.

And yet there is nothing in which the Church of *Rome* hath been more *zealouſly* concerned, than to keep the People in ignorance: Nothing they have oppoſed with more obſtinacy, againſt the repeated application of Princes, and People, at the beginning of the Reformation; than to allow the People the uſe of the Scriptures, in their publick Prayers, in a known Tongue. And their obſtinacy in this point, was not without Reaſon; nothing being more certain, than that if the People were once brought to Underſtand the Scriptures, they would ſoon quit *their* Religion, which in ſo many things is ſo directly contrary to the word of God. The

III. And laſt thing remains to be ſpoken to, *viz.* How far the doing of things, out of *a Zeal for God*, doth Mitigate and Extenuate the Evil of them. For when the Apoſtle here teſtifies, concerning the *Jews*, that they had *a zeal of God*, he ſpeaks this in favour of them, and by way of mitigation of their fault. *I bear them record*; I who was once acted by this ignorant and furious zeal, which now poſſeſſeth them, and perſecuted the Chriſtians in the ſame outragious manner, as they ſtill continue to do, and all this with a very good Conſcience, as I thought, and out of *a zeal for God*, and the true Religion. So he tells us, Acts 26. 9. *I verily thought with my ſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth.* So that his zeal was ſincere, and with a real intention to do Service to God and Religion; and yet for all that was very faulty and ſinful, and, if he had perſiſted in it, Damnable; ſo that his confidence, that he was in the right, and the Sincerity of his zeal in acting according to the perſwaſion of his Conſcience,

ſcience, did not alter the Nature of the actions he did out of this zeal, and make them leſs wicked in themſelves; tho' it was ſome mitigation of the fault of the Perſon, and render'd him more capable of the Mercy of God, by Repentance, than if he had done contrary to his Conſcience, and the clear convictions of his own Mind.

And therefore the beſt way to underſtand the great Evil and Wickedneſs of this furious and blind Zeal, will be, to conſider the account which St. *Paul*, after his Converſion, gives of his own doings, and what load he lays upon himſelf, notwithſtanding the Sincerity of his Zeal, and that he acted according to his Conſcience. *Acts* viii. and ix. you have the Hiſtory at large of his outrageous doings, how *he made havock of the Church, entering into every houſe, and haling men and women to Priſon; how he breathed out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord.* Acts 22. 4. *I perſecuted*, ſays he, *this way unto the death, binding and delivering into Priſons both men and women.* And Ch. 26. 10, 11. *Many of the Saints did I ſhut up*

*in Priſon, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt them; and I puniſhed them often in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted them even to ſtrange Cities.* Gal. 1. 13, 14. *Ye have heard,* ſays he, *of my converſation in times paſt, in the Jews Religion; how that beyond meaſure I perſecuted the Church of God, and waſted it, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *Who was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecuter, and injurious.* So that he chargeth himſelf with the guilt of Blaſphemy and Murder, and a moſt furious and outrageous Perſecution of Good Men; for which elſewhere he pronounceth himſelf *the chief of Sinners.* From whence it evidently appears, that Men may do the moſt Wicked and Damnable Sins, out of *a zeal for God.*

And this was the caſe of many of the *Jews*, as our Saviour foretold, that *the time ſhould come, when they ſhould kill men, thinking they did God good Service.* But yet for all this, the Apoſtles of our Lord make no ſcruple, to charge them with down-

downright Murder. *Acts* 2. 23. ſpeaking of their putting our Saviour to death, *whom ye by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* And Acts 7. 52. *The juſt One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.*

Yet notwithſtanding their Sin was of this high Nature in it ſelf; yet it was ſome mitigation of the fault of the Perſons, that they did theſe things out of *an ignorant zeal*, and rendred them more capable of the Mercy of God, upon their repentance. And upon this account our Saviour interceded with God for Mercy for them; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* St. *Peter* alſo pleads the ſame in mitigation of their fault, Acts 3. 17. *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers.* And St. *Paul* tells us, that *he found mercy*, upon his repentance, on this account, 1 Tim. 1. 13. *But I obtained mercy, becauſe I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief.* But ſtill, for all this, wicked things done out of Conſcience and Zeal for God, are Damnable, and will prove ſo, without repentance.

I ſhall now draw ſome *Inferences* from this Diſcourſe, by way of Application.

1. If it be ſo neceſſary, that our zeal be directed by knowledge; this ſhews us how dangerous a thing zeal is in the weak and ignorant ſort of People. Zeal is an Edg-Tool, which Children in underſtanding ſhould not meddle withal; and yet it moſt frequently poſſeſſeth the weakeſt Minds; and commonly by how much *the leſs knowing* People are, by ſo much *the more zealous* they are: And in the Church of *Rome*, where Knowledge is profeſſedly diſcouraged, and ſuppreſt in the common People, Zeal is mightily countenanced and cheriſh'd. And they make great uſe of it; for this blind and furious zeal, is that which inſpires them to do ſuch Cruel and Barbarous things, as were hardly ever acted among the Heathen. Zeal is only fit for wiſe Men; but it is chiefly in Faſhion among Fools.

Nay,

Nay it is dangerous in the hands of wiſe Men, and to be govern'd and kept in with a ſtrict rein; otherwiſe it will tranſport them to the doing of Undue and Irregular things. *Moſes*, one of the wiſeſt and beſt of Men, and moſt likely to govern and manage his zeal as he ought, and to keep aloof from all Exceſs and Extravagance, being *the meekeſt Man upon Earth*, yet he was ſo ſurpriſed, upon a ſudden occaſion, that *in a fit of zeal*, he let fall the Two Tables of the Law, which he had but juſt received from God, and daſht them in pieces. A true Emblem of *an ungoverned zeal*, in the tranſport whereof even Good Men are apt to forget the Laws of God, and let them fall out of their Hands, and to break all the Obligations of Natural and Moral Duties.

2. From hence we plainly ſee, that Men may do the worſt and wickedeſt things, out of *a Zeal for God* and Religion. Thus it was among the *Jews*, who engroſt Salvation to themſelves, and denyed the poſſibility of it to all

the world beſides; and the Church of *Rome* have taken Copy by them, as in an arrogant conceit of themſelves, ſo in the blindneſs, and fury, and uncharitableneſs of their Zeal towards all, who refuſe to ſubmit to their Authority and Directions.

And as the Teachers and Rulers of the *Jewiſh* Church did of old, ſo do the Church of *Rome* now; *They take away the Key of Knowledge from the People, and will neither enter into the kingdom of heaven themſelves, nor ſuffer thoſe that would, to enter in.* They Brand for *Hereticks* thoſe who make the Holy Scriptures the Rule of their Faith, and Worſhip; as St. *Paul* tells us the *Jews* did in his Time, *Acts* 24. 14. *After the way which they call Hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets.* They Eſtabliſh the Merit of their own Righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting to the Righteouſneſs of God, by the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt. So St. *Paul* tells us *the Jews* did, in the Verſe immediately after the Text; *For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and*

*and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.* And as the *Jews* Anathematiz'd and Excommunicated the firſt Chriſtians, and Perſecuted them to the Death, as our Saviour foretold, *That the time would come, when they ſhould put them out of their Synagogues, yea and kill them, thinking they did God good ſervice*; ſo the Church of *Rome* hath, for many Ages, uſed the ſincere Profeſſors of the ſame Religion, Perſecuting them, firſt with Excommunication, and then with Fire and Faggot; and with all the violence and fury in the world endeavouring the utter extirpation and ruine of them, by bloody *Croiſado's* and a barbarous *Inquiſition*, by treacherous *Maſſacres*, and all ſorts of *helliſh Plots and Machinations*; witneſs the monſtrous Deſign of *this day*, never to be remembred or mentioned without horror, *To have deſtroyed at one blow, and have ſwallowed up in one common ruine, our King, and Prince, and Nobles, and the Repreſentative Body of the whole Nation*; witneſs the bloody Maſſacre of *Ireland*, and all their wicked Deſigns

Deſigns and Practices, continued to this very day.

3. *And laſtly*, That *zeal for God* and Religion, does not alter the Nature of Actions done upon that account. Perſecution and Murder of the ſincere Profeſſors of Religion, are *Damnable Sins*; and no *zeal for God and Religion* can excuſe them, or take away the guilt of them; *zeal for God* will juſtifie no Action that we do, unleſs there be *diſcretion* to juſtifie our *zeal.*

There is nothing oftner miſ-leads Men, than a miſguided zeal; it is an *ignis fatuus*, a *falſe fire*, which often leads Men into Boggs and Precipices; it appears in the Night, in dark and ignorant and weak minds, and offers it ſelf a guide to thoſe who have loſt their way; it is one of the moſt ungovernable Paſſions of Human Nature, and therefore requires great knowledge and judgment to manage it, and keep it within bounds. It is like fire, a good Servant, but a bad Maſter; if it once get head, it conſumes and devours all before it; and the great danger

ger and miſchief of it is, that it is moſt commonly found where it ſhould not be, and poſſeſſes thoſe moſt, who are leaſt fit to govern it; and moſt frequently employed about what it ſhould not be; and ten to one but it is either miſtaken in the *Object*, or in the *Meaſure* and *Degree* of it; and even when it is a Virtue, it is a nice and dangerous one; for the wiſeſt Men are apt to mingle their own *Paſſions* and *Intereſts* with their *Zeal for God and Religion.* So that it is not enough that Men are acted by *a zeal for God*, and do ſincerely follow the dictates of their Conſciences; but they muſt be careful to inform their Conſciences, and not ſuffer themſelves to be violently tranſported and hurried on, by their own Paſſions and Prejudice, and by a blind and furious *zeal without knowledge.*

But what then? Would we have Men not follow their own Conſciences, or act contrary to them? No, by no means: For tho' Conſcience be not our *Rule*; yet it is our *immediate Guide*; and he does ill, who does act againſt his Conſcience. But Men muſt be careful

ful how they ſettle their Practical Judgment of things, and conclude things to be Lawful or Unlawful, Duties or Sins, without Reaſon and good Ground.

God hath given us Underſtandings, to try and examine things, and the light of his Word to direct us in this tryal; and if we will judge raſhly, and ſuffer our ſelves to be hurried by Prejudice or Paſſion, *the Errours of our Judgment* become *Faults of our Lives*: For God expects from us, that we ſhould weigh and conſider what we do; and when he hath afforded us light enough to diſcern betwixt *Good* and *Evil*, that we ſhould carefully follow the direction of it; that we ſhould be ſuſpicious of our ſelves, when our Zeal carries us to do things that are furious and cruel, falſe and treacherous, and have a horrid appearance even to the light of Nature; we ſhould queſtion *that zeal* which is ſo contrary to Chriſtian Goodneſs and Meekneſs, to Peace and Charity, and which tends to *Confuſion and every Evil Work*.

I will conclude all with that excellent Paſſage of St. *James*, which will ſhew us how little regard is to be had to many Mens Pretences of Zeal for Religion, Jam. 3. 13. *Who is a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge amongſt you? Let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom. But if ye have bitter zeal and ſtrife in your hearts; glory not, and lye not againſt the truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above; but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. For where zeal and ſtrife is; there is confuſion, and every evil work. But the wiſdom which is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſie to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocriſie: And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.*

A

# SERMON

Preached

*November* 5. 1686.

## JOHN XVI. 2.

*They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues: Yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice.*

THeſe words were ſpoken by our Bleſſed Saviour, when he was about to leave the World; at the thoughts whereof, finding his Diſciples

ciples to be exceedingly troubled, he comforts them by the Conſideration of the great Benefit and Advantage which from thence would accrue to them; he tells them that he was going to Heaven, to intercede for them, and to make way for their admiſſion there; and withal promiſeth, that his Father would ſend the Holy Ghoſt, who ſhould abundantly ſupply the want of *his* Preſence with them: but he tells them at the ſame time, that they ſhould meet with very ill Entertainment and Uſage from the World; but ſo had *He*, Ch. 15. 18. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you*; and why ſhould *they* expect to be better treated than *He* was? *v.* 20. *Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, the ſervant is not greater than the Lord; if they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you.*

And at the beginning of this Chapter he tells them, that he did on purpoſe forewarn them of theſe things, to prepare their Minds beforehand, and to arm them againſt the worſt that might happen; *v.* 1. *Theſe things have*

*I ſpoken*

*I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended.* And then he declares more particularly, how far the Rage and Malice of Men ſhould proceed againſt them, and in what kind they ſhould ſuffer: *They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues: Yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice.*

So that our Saviour here foretells Two ſorts of Perſecution, which his Diſciples ſhould be Exerciſed withal, *Excommunication*; *they ſhall put you out of their Synagogues*: and *Exciſion*; *Yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice.* And theſe perhaps were but ſeveral Kinds and Degrees of *Excommunication*; for the clearer underſtanding whereof, it will be requiſite, briefly to explain the Three Degrees of *Excommunication* among the Jews.

The Firſt call'd *Niddui*, is that which our Saviour here means, by *putting out of the Synagogue*; and which he elſewhere expreſſeth by ἀφορισμὸς, or *ſeperation*. Luke 6. 22.

*Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company.* And the Effect *of this Excommunication* was to exclude Men from the Communion of the Church and People of God, and from his Service; which was a great diſgrace; becauſe, after this Sentence, none of the *Jews* were to converſe with them, but to look upon them *as Heathens and Publicans.*

The Second Degree of this Cenſure was called *Cherem*; which included the firſt, but extended farther, to the Confiſcation of Goods into the Sacred Treaſury, and devoting them to God; after which there was no Redemption of them. And of this we find expreſs mention, *Ezra.* 10. 7, 8. where it is ſaid, *That they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jeruſalem, unto all the children of the captivity, that they ſhould gather themſelves together unto Jeruſalem; and that whoſoever would not come within three days, according to the Counſel of the Princes and Elders, all his ſubſtance ſhould be devoted, and himſelf*

*ſeparated*

*ſeparated from the congregation of thoſe that had been carried away.*

The Third Degree was *Shammatha*, when the Rebellious and Contumacious Perſon was Anathematiz'd and Devoted, and, as ſome conceive, according to the Law (*Levit.* 27. 29.) was to be put to death; tho' other very knowing Men in the Jewiſh Learning think it amounted, to no more, than a final Sentence, whereby they were left to the Judgment of God, by ſome remarkable Judgment of his to be cut off from the Congregation of *Iſrael*.

Of the Firſt and Laſt of theſe Degrees of Excommunication, our Saviour ſeems here to ſpeak; but whether in both Inſtances in the *Text*, he alludes in the one to the loweſt, and in the other to the higheſt Degree of *Excommunication* among the Jews, is not ſo certain. To the *Firſt* he plainly does, when he ſays, *they ſhall put you out of the Synagogues*: And then he adds, that they ſhould proceed much higher againſt them, even to put them to death; *the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you*

*will think that he doth God ſervice*; that is, they ſhould not only think it *Lawful* to kill them, but look upon it as *a Duty*, as a high Act of Religion, as an acceptable Piece of Worſhip, and *a Sacrifice well pleaſing to God*. For ſo indeed the word does not only import, but moſt properly ſignifie, *whoſoever killeth you ſhall think*, λατρειαν προσφερειν τῳ θεῳ, *that he offers a Sacrifice to God*; for ſo ſo the word λατρεια is ſometimes uſed, for *a Sacrifice*; but being joyned with προσφερειν ſeems neceſſarily to be determined to that Senſe.

From the words thus explained, I ſhall make theſe following *Obſervations*, very proper for our Conſideration upon the Occaſion of *this day*.

1. That the beſt of Men may be ſeparated and excluded from the Communion of thoſe, who may aſſume to themſelves to be the true and the only true Church; yea and ſuffer under the Notion of very Bad and Criminal Perſons. This our Saviour here foretold of his Apoſtles, ſome of the beſt Men

Men that ever lived: *They ſhall put you out of their Synagogues.*

2. That they who are thus Excommunicated, by the pretended true Church, may nevertheleſs be real Members of the true Church of Chriſt. Tho' the Apoſtles were thus dealt with all by the Jewiſh Church; they did not ceaſe for all that to be Members of the true Church of God.

3. That from uncharitable Cenſures Men do eaſily and almoſt naturally proceed to Cruel Actions. After they had *put* the Diſciples of our Lord *out of their Synagogues*, and thereby concluded them to be *Hereticks* and *Reprobates*, they preſently proceed to *kill* them, as not worthy to live. *They ſhall put you out of their Synagogues*; and when they have done that, they will ſoon after think it a thing not only fit, but Pious and Meritorious, to put you to death; *the time will come, that they will think it a good ſervice to God, to kill you.*

4. That Men may do the Vileſt things, and the moſt Wicked, not only under *a grave pretence* of Religion, but out of *a real opinion and perſwaſion* that they do Religiouſly. Murder is certainly one of the greateſt and moſt crying Sins; and yet our Saviour foretells, that the Jews ſhould put his Diſciples to death, being verily perſwaded that in ſo doing they offered a moſt acceptable Sacrifice to God: *Yea the time ſhall come, that whoſoever killeth you ſhall think that he offers a Sacrifice to God.*

5. That ſuch Actions are never the leſs horribly Impious and Wicked, notwithſtanding the Good Mind with which, and the Good End for which they are done. The Jews were not excuſed from the guilt of Perſecution and Murder, for all they thought they did well in killing the Diſciples of our Lord.

6. I obſerve that the Corruption of the beſt things is the worſt. Religion is the higheſt Accompliſhment

and

and Perfection of Humane Nature; and Zeal for God and his Truth an excellent Quality, and highly acceptable to God: And yet nothing is more Barbarous, and ſpurs Men on to more horrible Impieties, than a blind zeal for God, and falſe and miſtaken Principles in the matter of Religion; as is plain from the Inſtances here before us in the *Text*. I ſhall ſpeak as briefly as I can to theſe *Obſervations*.

1 That the beſt of Men may be ſeparated and excluded from the Communion of thoſe, who may aſſume to be the true and only true Church, and that, under the Notion of very Bad and Criminal Perſons. This our Saviour foretells in the *Text* ſhould be the fate of his Apoſtles, ſome of the beſt and holieſt Perſons that ever lived; *they ſhall put you out of the Synagogues.*

And what the Jews did in the beginning of Chriſtianity, to the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour, hath been too frequently practiſed ſince,

by ſome of the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity toward one another; and very Good Men have in ſeveral Ages fallen under the Cenſure of *Excommunication*, and been ſeparated from the External Communion of the Church, and branded with the odious Names of *Hereticks* and *Apoſtates*, by thoſe who have arrogated to themſelves to be *the only Orthodox and true Church*, and have gotten the external Power and Management of Religion into their hands; witneſs the Caſe of *Athanaſius* and others, in the Reign and Prevalency of *Arianiſme*; and the ill Treatment, that not only particular Perſons, Eminent for their Learning and Piety, but whole Churches have met with in this kind, from that haughty and uncharitable Church, which makes nothing of thundring out this moſt fearful Sentence of *Excommunication*, againſt Perſons, and Churches, much better and more Chriſtian than her ſelf, and againſt all that will not ſubmit to her pretended Infallibility, and uſurped Authority over the Souls and Conſciences of Men.

But

But it is our great Comfort, that the Apoſtles and Diſciples of our Lord and Maſter were thus uſed, by a Church that made the ſame Pretences that they do, and upon Grounds every whit as plauſible, as I could clearly ſhew, if I were minded to perſue and make out this Compariſon.

2. They who are thus Excommunicated, by the pretended only true Chuch, may nevertheleſs be true Members of the Church of Chriſt. Tho' the Apoſtles were thus dealt withall by the Jewiſh Church; they did not ceaſe for all this to be real Members of the true Church of God. For it is not calling *Hereticks* firſt, that proves them that do ſo to be no Hereticks, or acquits them from the ſame or greater Crimes, than thoſe which they are ſo forward to charge upon other Men; nor will God condemn all thoſe who are Excommunicated by Men, and deny Salvation to every one, whom they ſhall pleaſe to ſeparate from their Society, and to call by ſome odious name. Men may be put out of the Synagogue, and yet receiv'd into Heaven;

for

for *the Judgment of God is* not according to the uncharitable Cenſures of Men; but *according to Truth* and Right.

The Sentence of *Excommunication* is certainly very dreadful, where it is duly inflicted; and next to the Judgment of God, Men ought to be afraid of juſtly incurring the danger of this Cenſure; and it ought to be upon very plain and evident grounds, that Men either ſeparate themſelves, or endanger their being cut off from the Communion of the Church they live in: but when it once comes to this, that a Church is infected with groſs Errors and Corruptions, plainly contrary to the Word of God, eſpecially if that Church will impoſe her Errors upon all that are of her Communion; then thoſe who refuſe to comply, do not *ſeparate themſelves*, but *are cut off*, do not *depart*, but *are driven out* of the Communion of that Church; and Separation in that caſe is as innocent and free from the guilt of *Schiſm*, as the Cauſe of it is; for the terms of Communion are become ſuch, that thoſe who are convinced

convinced of thoſe Errors and Corruptions can have no Salvation, if they continue in that Communion, and then I am ſure their Salvation will not be endangered by leaving it, or being Excommunicated out of it; for that would be the hardeſt caſe in the World, that Men ſhould be Damned for continuing in the Communion of ſuch a Church, and damned likewiſe for being caſt out of it.

Therefore no Man ought to be terrified, becauſe of the boldneſs and preſumption of thoſe, who with ſo much Confidence, and ſo little Charity, damn all that are not of their Communion; for we ſee plainly from the *Text*, that Men may be in the right and ſureſt way to Salvation, and yet be Excommunicated by thoſe who call themſelves the true Church, and will not allow Salvation to any, but thoſe of their own Communion. The Diſciples of our Lord and Saviour were certainly very good Men, and in a ſafe way of Salvation, tho' they were Excommunicated, and put out of the Synagogue, by

by the chief Prieſts and the Rulers of the Jewiſh Church. I proceed to the

3. *Obſervation*, which was this, that from uncharitable Cenſures, Men do by an eaſie ſtep, and almoſt naturally proceed to Cruel Actions. After the Jews had put the Diſciples of our Lord out of their Synagogues, and thereby concluded them to be *Heretick*s and *Reprobates*; no wonder they ſhould proceed to kill thoſe, whom they thought not worthy to live; *they ſhall put you out of their Synagogues*, (ſays our Saviour) and when they have done that, they will ſoon think it a thing not only fit and reaſonable, but Pious and Meritorious, and *a good Piece of Service done to God, to put you to death.* Uncharitableneſs naturally draws on Cruelty, and hardens Humane Nature towards thoſe, of whom we have once conceived ſo hard an opinion, that they are Enemies to God and his Truth.

And this hath been the ſource of the moſt barbarous Cruelties that have been in the world; witneſs the ſeverity of the Heathen Perſecution of the Chriſtians,

ſtians, which juſtified it ſelf by the Uncharitable Opinion which they had conceived of them, that they were deſpiſers of Religion and the Gods, and conſequently Atheiſts; that they were pertinacious and obſtinate in their Opinions, that is, in the Modern Stile, they were *Hereticks*. And the like uncharitable conceit among Chriſtians hath been thought a ſufficient ground (even in the judgment of the *Infallible Chair*) for the juſtification of ſeveral bloody *Maſſacres*, and the cruel Proceedings of the *Inquiſition* againſt Perſons ſuſpected of Hereſie; for after Men are once Sentenced to Eternal Damnation, it ſeems a ſmall thing, to torment and deſtroy their Bodies.

4. Men may do the vileſt and moſt wicked things, not only under a *grave Pretence* of Religion, but out of *a real Opinion and Perſwaſion of Mind*, that they do Religiouſly. Murder is certainly one of the greateſt and moſt crying Sins; and yet our Saviour foretels, that the *Jews* ſhould put his Diſciples to Death, being *verily perſwaded*, that in ſo doing they ſhould offer a moſt acceptable

acceptable Sacrifice to God; *yea the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you ſhall think that he offers a Sacrifice to God.*

Not but that the great Duties and Virtues of Religion are very plain and eaſie to be underſtood; and ſo are the contrary Sins and Vices: but then they are only plain to a teachable, and honeſt, and well-diſpoſed mind; to thoſe *who receive the word with meekneſs*, and are not blinded by wrath and furious Zeal; to thoſe that *receive the truth into an honeſt heart*, and *entertain it in the love of it*; they are plain to the humble and meek; *for the humble God will guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his ways*; ſuch as *theſe* God ſeldom ſuffers to fall into fatal miſtakes about their Sin, or Duty, ſo as *to call good evil, and evil good, to call light darkneſs, and darkneſs light*; to think Uncharitableneſs a Virtue, and downright Murder a great Duty.

But if Men will give up themſelves to be ſwayed by ſelf-Love and ſelf-Conceit, to be governed by any baſe or corrupt Intereſt, to be blinded by Prejudice,

Prejudice, and intoxicated by Pride, to be tranſported and hurried away by violent and furious Paſſions; no wonder if they miſtake the Nature, and confound the Differences of things, in the plaineſt and moſt palpable caſes; no wonder if *God give up* Perſons of ſuch corrupt minds *to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies.* It ought not to be ſtrange to us, if ſuch Men bring their Underſtandings to their Wills and Intereſts, and bend their Judgments to their Prejudices, make them to ſtoop to their Pride, and blindly to follow their Paſſions, which way ſoever they lead them; for God uſually leaves ſuch Perſons to themſelves, as run away from him, and is not concerned to ſecure thoſe from ſplitting upon the moſt dangerous Rocks, who will ſtear their courſe by no Compaſs, but commit themſelves to the wind and tide of their own Luſts and Paſſions.

In theſe Caſes Men may take the wrong Way; and yet believe themſelves to be in the right: they may oppoſe the Truth, and perſecute the Profeſſors of it, and be guilty of the blackeſt

blackeſt Crimes, and the moſt horrid Impieties, Malice and Hatred, Blaſphemy and Murder; and yet all the while be *verily perſwaded*, that they are ſerving God, and ſacrificing to him.

Of this we have a plain, and full inſtance, in the Scribes and Phariſees, the chief Prieſts and Rulers among the Jews, who becauſe *they ſought the Honour of Men, and not that which was from God, and loved the Praiſe of Men, more than the Praiſe of God*; becauſe they were prejudiced againſt the Meanneſs of our Saviour's Birth and Condition, and had upon falſe Grounds (tho' as they thought upon the Infallibility of Tradition, and of Scripture interpreted by Tradition) entertain'd quite other Notions of the *Meſſias*, from what he really was to be; becauſe they were proud, and thought themſelves too wiſe to learn of him; and becauſe his Doctrine of Humility, and ſelf-Denyal, did thwart their Intereſt, and bring down their Authority and Credit among the People; therefore they ſet themſelves againſt him with all their Might, oppoſing his Doctrine, and

and blaſting his Reputation, and perſecuting him to the Death; and all this while did bear up themſelves with a conceit of the *Antiquity* and *Priviledges* of their Church, and their profound Knowledge in the Law of God, and a great External ſhew of Piety and Devotion, and an arrogant Pretence and Uſurpation of being *the only Church* and People of God in the World: And by virtue of theſe Advantages, they thought they might do any thing; and that whoſoever oppoſed the Authority of *ſo ancient and good a Church*, muſt needs be very bad Men, and deſerve to be proceeded againſt in the ſevereſt manner. As if any pretence of Piety could give a Priviledge to do wickedly, and by how much the Wiſer and Holier any Man took himſelf to be, he might do ſo much the worſe things.

There is another remarkable Inſtance of this in St. *Paul*, who out of a blind and furious Zeal, for *the Traditions of his Fathers*, Perſecuted the true Church of God, by Impriſonment and Death, and all manner of Cruelties;

and all this while *he verily thought* that he was in the right, and *that he ought to do* all theſe *things againſt the name of Jeſus of Nazareth.* And if God had not in a miraculous manner checkt him in his courſe, and changed his Mind, he would have ſpent his whole life in that courſe of Perſecution and Cruelty, and would (with Pope *Paul* the IV. upon his Death-Bed) have recommended *the Inquiſition* (or if he could have thought of any thing more ſevere) to the chief Prieſts and Rulers of the Jewiſh Church.

I will not trouble you with nearer Inſtances; tho' the Jewiſh Church is not the only Church in the World, that hath countenanced the Deſtruction and Extirpation of thoſe who differed from them, as a piece of very acceptable Service to God, and meritorious of the Pardon of their Sins.

5. I obſerve that ſuch Actions as theſe are never the leſs horribly Wicked and Impious, notwitſtanding the good Mind with which, and the good End for which they are done. The Jews were

were not excuſed from the guilt of Perſecution and Murder, for all they thought they did well, in killing the Diſciples of our Lord.

For to make an Action good and acceptable to God, the goodneſs of all Cauſes, and of all Circumſtances, muſt concur; and any one defect in any of theſe, does vitiate the whole Action, and ſpoil the goodneſs of it. We muſt do it with a good Mind, being verily perſwaded that what we do is good and acceptable to God; in which ſenſe St. *Paul* ſaith, that *whatever is not of Faith is Sin*; and we muſt do it for a good End, for the Honour of God, and the Service of Religion, and the Benefit and Edification of Men. But there is one thing wanting yet, which is often forgotten, but is mainly conſiderable, *viz.* what we do with a Good Mind, and to a Good End, muſt be Good and Lawful in it ſelf, commanded or allowed, or at leaſt not forbidden by God: If it be; what good Circumſtances ſoever may belong to the Action, the whole Action is ſtark naught; becauſe the very Matter and

Subſtance of it is Evil, and Unlawful, and Damnable, tho' done for never ſo good an End. So St. *Paul* tells us, that they *who ſaid they might do evil, that good might come, their damnation was juſt.* He tells us indeed, that ſome would have charged this Doctrine upon the Chriſtians, and particularly upon himſelf; but he rejects it, with the greateſt deteſtation; and (which is not unworthy of our obſervation) in his Epiſtle to *the Roman Church*; as if the Spirit of God, to whom all Times are preſent, had particularly directed him to give this Caution to *that Church*, that in future Ages they might be warned againſt ſo Pernicious a Principle, and all wicked Practices that are conſequent upon it.

And we find that St. *Paul*, after his Converſion, did think it no ſufficient Plea and Excuſe for himſelf, and his Perſecution of the Chriſtian Profeſſion, that what he did was out of Zeal for God and his true Religion, as *he was verily perſwaded*; but, notwithſtanding that, acknowledgeth himſelf *a Murderer*, and *one of the greateſt Sinners*; for which,

which, without *the great Mercy of God*, he had periſht everlaſtingly.

6. *And laſtly*, I obſerve that the Corruption of the beſt things is the worſt. Religion is certainly the higheſt Accompliſhment and Perfection of Humane Nature; and Zeal for God and his Truth an excellent Quality, and highly acceptable to God: and yet nothing is more barbarous, and ſpurs Men on to more horrid Impieties, than a blind zeal for God, and falſe and miſtaken Principles in the matter of Religion.

Our Saviour compares the Chriſtian Religion, and the Miniſters and Profeſſors of it, to Salt and Light, The moſt uſeful and delightful things in the World. Religion enlightens the minds of Men, and directs them in the way, wherein we ſhould go; it ſeaſons the Spirits and Manners of Men, and preſerves them from being Putrified and Corrupted: but *if the Salt loſe its ſavour*, if that which ſhould ſeaſon other things, be tainted it ſelf; *it is thenceforth* the moſt inſipid and offenſive thing in the

World, *good for nothing, but to be caſt upon the Dunghil: if the light that is in us be darkneſs; how great is that darkneſs?*

Miſtakes and falſe Principles are no where ſo pernicious, and of ſuch miſchievous Conſequence, as in Religion. A blind and miſguided Zeal in Religion is enough to ſpoil the beſt Nature and Diſpoſition in the World. St. *Paul* (for ought appears) was of himſelf of a very kind and compaſſionate Nature; and yet what *a Fury* did his miſtaken Zeal make him! It is hardly credible how madly he laid about him, but that he himſelf gives us the account of it, Acts 26. 9, 10, 11. *I verily thought with my ſelf*, (ſays he) *that I ought to do many things, contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth; which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem, and many of the Saints I ſhut up in Priſon, having received authority from the Chief Prieſts. And when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt them; and I puniſhed them oft in every Synagogue, and compel'd them to blaſpheme, and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted them, even to ſtrange Cities.*

I might deſcend lower, and give Inſtances both of former and later times, of Emperours and Princes, both Heathen and Chriſtian, that of themſelves were mild and gentle; and yet through a miſtaken Zeal, and the inſtigation of their Chief Prieſts, have been carried to Cruel and Bloody things. And indeed nothing gives ſo keen an edg, even to the mildeſt Tempers, as an erroneous and wild zeal for God and Religion; it is like Quick-Silver in the back of a Sword, that is not very ſharp of it ſelf, which gives a mighty force and weight to its blow, and makes it to cut terribly.

And it is very ſad to conſider, that the zealous Proſecution of Miſtakes in Religion, hath produced ſadder and more barbarous Effects in the World, and more frequently, than the ordinary Corruptions and Degeneracy of Natural light is apt to do; as the decay of the richeſt and moſt generous Wines makes the ſowereſt Vineger; ſo that the Paſquil or Libel againſt Pope *Urban* the VIII. upon occaſion of his

taking off the Brazen Roof of the Old Capitol (which had held out ſo many Ages, and that notwithſtanding *Rome* had been ſo often ſackt by Barbarous Nations) and his ſelling it to inrich his Family [*quod non fecerant Barbari, fecerunt Barberini*] may, with changing the Name and Occaſion, be applyed to a great many others; that they have been guilty of thoſe Cruelties againſt Chriſtians, upon account of difference in Religion, which the moſt Barbarous Nations never exerciſed upon one another.

I have done with *the Obſervations* and the *Text*; and ſhall I now need to make any *Application* of what hath been ſaid, to the Occaſion of *this day*? The thing applys it ſelf; ſince *the horrid Deſign* of *this Day* was undertaken and carryed on upon the ſame Pretences and Principles, upon which the *Jews* perſecuted the Diſciples of our Lord, and much in the ſame Method; for they firſt thunder'd out an *Excommunication* againſt them, and then took it for granted, that it would be *an acceptable Sacrifice to God, to deſtroy them.*

I will not go about to aggravate *the Conſpiracy of this Day*, it is paſt my skill; nor will I extend the blame and guilt of it any farther than the plain Evidence and Reaſon of the thing does enforce. It is a thing ſo ſcandalous to *Humane Nature*, and ſo great a Reflection upon any *Church* and *Religion*, to be acceſſory to the contriving or countenancing of any *ſuch Deſign*, that I am very well contented, that it ſhould be confined to as narrow a compaſs as may be, and none eſteemed guilty of it, but thoſe that were openly in it, or have ſince endeavour'd to excuſe it. All that we deſire of *others*, is, that they would declare their hearty deteſtation of ſuch abominable Practices, and be as good as their word; and that they would not account it *a ſervice and ſacrifice to God*, to deſtroy all that cannot be of their Mind.

So that the *Inference* from all this Diſcourſe, in ſhort, ſhall be this, that Men ſhould take great care to inform their Conſciences aright, and to govern them by the plain Rules of Good and Evil,

Evil, the Law of God written upon our hearts, and revealed in his Word, which forbids ſuch Practices as I have been ſpeaking of, as clearly as the Sun ſhines at Noonday; and that we would always be afraid to do a bad thing, tho gilded over with never ſo glorious Colours, and ſpecious Pretences of zeal for God and his Truth. For a Man may do a thing with an honeſt Mind, and for a religious End, and be Commiſſioned and Countenanced (as St. *Paul* was) by them who take themſelves to be *the only true Church* in the world; and yet at laſt prove to have been all the while *a Blaſphemer*, and *a Murderer*, and *the greateſt of Sinners*; for none of theſe Pretences are ſufficient to warrant and ſanctifie a wicked action: Before this can be done, the immutable nature of Good and Evil muſt be changed.

I will conclude all with that gentle Reproof of our Bleſſed Saviour to his Diſciples, when their Zeal for him had tranſported them to make that cruel Requeſt to him, that he would (as *Elias* had done upon a like occaſion) *call for fire from heaven to deſtroy the Samari-*

*Samaritans: Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of man came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them*; hereby declaring to us the true Spirit and Temper of Chriſtianity, and that they that act contrary to it, are ignorant of the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion; *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of man came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.*

A

# SERMON

Preached on

the 29. of *May*, 1693.

1 TIM. II. 1, 2.

*I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for Kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

I Need not tell any here, that *this Day* is appointed by Authority for an *Anniversary Solemnity*, in a grateful

grateful Commemoration of the great Mercy of God to theſe Nations, in putting an end to the inteſtine Wars and Confuſions of many Years, in reſtoring to us our own ancient Government and Laws, and in bringing home, as upon *this Day*, the rightful Heir of theſe Kingdoms, to the Crown and Throne of his Fathers: And tho' the Glory of *this Day* hath been not a little ſullied and obſcured by many things which have happened ſince that Time, fitter now to be buried in Silence and Oblivion, than to be mention'd and raked up; yet it hath pleaſed God, in ſcattering thoſe black Clouds, which not long ſince hung over us, to reſtore *this Day* to its firſt Luſtre and Brightneſs; ſo that we may now with great joy look back upon it, as deſigned by the wiſe Providence of God, to make way for the Happineſs which we now enjoy under *their preſent Majeſties*, by whom, under God, we have been delivered from that terrible and imminent Danger which threatned our *Religion* and *Laws*, and the very *Conſtitution* it ſelf of our *ancient Government*. And to this Occaſion, no kind

of

of Argument can be more proper and ſutable, than that which the *Text* affords to our Conſideration, in this Injunction of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, to take care, that in the Publick Worſhip of God, *Supplications* and *Thanksgivings* be put up to God, *for Kings, and all that are in authority. I exhort therefore*, &c.

In which Words there are *Four* things conſiderable.

*Firſt*, The Duty here enjoyned, which is Prayer; expreſſed to us in ſeveral Words, which ſeem to denote the ſeveral kinds or parts of Prayer; *I exhort therefore, that ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: For Kings, and for all that are in authority*, &c. Some of theſe words are of a very near ſignification; and yet there ſeems ſome difference betwixt them, moſt probably this:

1. By Δεήσεις, which we render *Supplications*, is probably meant that part or kind of Prayer, wherein we ſupplicate God for the Pardon of our Sins,

Sins, and for the averting and removing of Evils, whether Temporal or Spiritual, from our ſelves or others.

2. By προσευχὰς, which we render *Prayers*, ſeems to be meant Petitions for Bleſſings and good things from God; and theſe are moſt properly call'd *Prayers*.

3. By Ἐντεύξεις, ſeems to be particularly meant Pleadings and *Interceſſions* on the behalf of others.

4. By Εὐχαριστίας, is certainly intended Praiſes and *Thanksgivings* to God, for his Bleſſings and Goodneſs to our ſelves and others. This ſeems to be the difference between them, which whether it be exactly ſo or not, is not very material, ſince theſe are unqueſtionably the ſeveral kinds or parts of Prayer. And theſe ſeveral ſorts of Prayer, St. *Chryſoſtom*, in his Comment upon this *Text*, tells us were Publickly uſed in his Time, in the daily Service of the Church; "this (ſays he) all Communi-
"cants do know is done every day,
"Morning and Evening; how that we
pray

"pray for all the World, *for Kings, and* "*for all that are in authority.*

*Secondly*, For whom we are to pray: In general, *for all men.* Our Prayers are one of the greateſt and beſt Expreſſions of our Charity, and therefore ought to be as large and extenſive as our Charity is. We are bound in common Charity to love all men, and to wiſh well to them; but our bare Wiſhes ſignifie nothing, unleſs we direct them to God, who is able to confer upon them the Bleſſings and Good Things which we wiſh to them.

And this is a Charity which God hath put into every Man's power, and which the pooreſt Man in the World, as well as the richeſt, is capable of exerciſing at all times, and upon all occaſions: for *the Ear of God is open to the Prayers* of the poor, as well as of the rich, and they are every whit as prevalent with him; nay the Scripture ſeems to ſay, that God hath a more particular regard to the Prayers of *the poor.* So that we may be liberal and bountiful in our Prayers to thoſe, to whom we are able to give nothing elſe; and when

our hands cannot reach to relieve them, we may pour out our hearts to God for them; we may pray for their ſpiritual and temporal good, and we may praiſe God for the good which befalls them, tho it was out of our power to be any ways inſtrumental to procure it for them.

*Thirdly*, For whom we are more eſpecially, and in the firſt place, to pray; *viz.* for thoſe who have the greateſt and moſt publick influence of all others, upon the peace and happineſs of Mankind, *for Kings, and for all that are in authority*; that is, for the Supreme Magiſtrate, and for all inferior Magiſtrates, who derive their Power and Authority from the Supreme.

Government is neceſſary to the welfare of Mankind; becauſe it is the great Band of Humane Society, the Guard of its Peace, and the Security of every Man's Perſon and Property; and therefore we are concerned as much as is poſſible, both to pray for our Governours, and to bleſs God for them; becauſe without them we ſhould be in a moſt wretched condition. Mankind would

would be unavoidably miſerable without Government; Humane Society would preſently disband, and all things would run into confuſion. It is a remarkable Saying of one of the Jewiſh Maſters, *Pray for the happineſs of the Kingdom or Government; for if it were not for the fear of that, men would devour one another alive.* And *Joſephus* tells us, that *when the Jews were made ſubject to the Romans* (tho' it was by Conqueſt) *twice a day they offered up Sacrifices for the life and ſafety of the Emperour.* And this was very agreeable to what God had commanded that People by his Prophet, in a much like caſe, when the *Jews* were conquered by the King of *Babylon*, and carried away Captives, *Jer.* 29. 7. *Seek the peace of the City whither I have cauſed you to be carried away Captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace.* And ſurely the Reaſon is much ſtronger, why we ſhould pray for our *natural* Princes and Governours. I come now to the

*Fourth* and *Laſt* Thing Conſidered in *the Text*, and which I principally deſign to ſpeak to, namely, the Reaſon or Argument which the Apoſtle

uſes, to engage us to pray for our Princes, and for all that are in Authority, *that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty.* The manifold Benefits and Advantages which redound to us from our Governours, is a ſufficient Argument why we ſhould pray to God for them, and Praiſe him likewiſe for ſo great a bleſſing, and that in the firſt place; *I exhort therefore, firſt of all* (ſaith the Apoſtle,) *&c.* Now the Apoſtle here in the *Text* expreſſeth *Two* great Advantages of Government, which upon the Matter do comprehend all the reſt.

1. That by Government we are ſecured in our Civil Rights and Intereſts, in the quiet and peaceable Poſſeſſion of what is our own.

2. That we may thereby be protected in the free Practice and Exerciſe of Religion and Virtue.

Theſe are the *Two* greateſt and moſt deſirable things to Man; and neither of theſe can be had without Government. I ſhall briefly conſider theſe *Two* particulars, and then endeavour to

to ſhew, what Obligation the Conſideration of them lays upon us, both to pray to God in the behalf of our Princes and Governors, and likewiſe to Praiſe God for them: And then I ſhall conclude all with a brief *Application* of this whole Diſcourſe to the Solemn Occaſion of *this Day*.

*Firſt*, I ſhall begin with the Benefits and Advantages of Government mention'd in the *Text*, namely theſe *Two*,

1. That by it we are ſecured in our Civil Rights and Intereſts, in the quiet and peaceable Poſſeſſion of what is our own.

Without Government there could be no ſuch thing as Property in any thing beyond our own Perſons; for nothing but Law can make Property, and Laws are the Effect of Government and Authority: nay, without Government, we have no ſecurity of our Perſons and Lives, much leſs of any thing that belongs to us, and is at preſent in our Poſſeſſion. Were we not protected by Laws (which are the Effect of Government) we could have no ſafety, no quiet enjoyment of any thing; but eve-

ry Man muſt be perpetually upon his guard againſt all the World, and expoſed to continual Violence and Injuries from thoſe, who are too many, and too ſtrong for him; ſo that all our quiet and ſecurity from Fear and Danger, from the Fraud and Oppreſſion of thoſe who are more Crafty and Powerful than our ſelves, from endleſs Confuſions and Diſtractions, and from a State of perpetual Feud and War with all Mankind, is entirely due and owing to Civil Government.

And this alone is ſo unſpeakable a Benefit, that without it, *Men*, of all Creatures, would be the moſt Miſerable; becauſe all that Wit and Sagacity, all that Cunning and Contrivance, which Mankind hath above the bruit Creatures, would but enable them to do ſo much the more miſchief to one another, and to deviſe and find out more Powerful and Effectual Means and Inſtruments to harm and deſtroy one another.

In ſhort, that we live, and that we live well, in any tolerable condition either of Safety or Plenty, and that we

we are able to call any thing our own for one day, or for one hour; that we are not in perpetual Terrour and Apprehenſion of mortal Dangers, and that we are at any time free from the Invaſion of what we at preſent poſſeſs, by the fraud and force of others, is ſolely the Effect of this great Bleſſing, and Divine Appointment of Government, to preſerve the Peace of Humane Society, and by wiſe and wholſome Laws, to tye up Mens hands from mutual Injuries and Violence. Upon this all the Comfort and all the Security of Humane Laws does depend. From hence it comes to paſs, that (as the Scripture expreſſeth it) *We may ſit down every man under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree, and that there ſhall be none to make us afraid.* So that if Security is neceſſary to the comfort and happineſs of Mankind; then Government is ſo too: For without this, the Societies of Men would preſently diſſolve and fall in peices, and all things would run into Confuſion and Diſorder.

2. Another great Benefit which may reaſonably be expected from Go-

vernment (tho' it do not always ſo happen) is, that Men are protected by it, in the free Exerciſe and Practice of Religion and Virtue. Therefore we ſhould *pray for Kings, and for all that are in authority*, (ſays the Apoſtle) *that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godlineſs and honeſty*; that is, in the Practice of Piety and Devotion towards God; of Sobriety and Temperance in regard to our ſelves; and of Juſtice and Charity toward all Men.

It's true indeed, (and ſo the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians found it by experience) that the Edg and Authority of Laws may be, and ſometimes is turned upon the true Religion, and the ſincere Profeſſors of it: but even then, tho' Good Men may receive great harms and injuries from Perſecuting Princes and Governors; (as the Primitive Chriſtians did from ſeveral of the *Roman* Emperours) yet then it ſo happens, that Good Men have ſome conſiderable Benefit and Protection from the Civil Government and Laws, being for the moſt part preſerved from the fury and rage of the Multitude; ſo that tho' particular Perſons undergo

go the Tryal of Cruel Sufferings, yet much greater Numbers do eſcape and are preſerved.

And, which is very conſiderable in this Matter, againſt ſeveral of the main and eſſential parts of Religion, there never was any Humane Laws made; as againſt the inward Love, Honour, and Reverence of Almighty God, and the Worſhiping of him in our Hearts, and in Secret; of this part of Religion, Humane Laws can take no cognizance: nay, farther yet, againſt Humility and Meekneſs, againſt Modeſty and Patience, againſt Temperance and Chaſtity, againſt Peaceableneſs and Obedience to Government, againſt Juſtice and Gratitude, againſt Charity and Forgiveneſs of Injuries, *againſt theſe* and ſuch like Virtues, the Apoſtle has told us, *there is no Law.* Againſt the Practice of theſe (without ſome of which Government could not poſſibly ſubſiſt) no Perſecution was ever raiſed, no not by the worſt of Governours: on the contrary, in the Practice of theſe Virtues, Good Men have been in all Ages and Times protected by Law.

'Tis

'Tis true indeed, that Good Men have many times been grievouſly Perſecuted by the Civil Government and Authority, for *the external Profeſſion of revealed Religion*; which was the caſe of the Chriſtians at that Time, when the Apoſtle commanded them *to pray for Kings, and for all that were in authority; that under their protection, they might lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godlineſs and honeſty.* St. *Paul* knew very well, when he gave this injunction to them, *that ſupplications and prayers be made for Kings, and for all that are in authority*, that the Powers of the World did not at that Time favour Chriſtianity: but he knew likewiſe, that Government was neceſſary to the Happineſs of Mankind, and that Chriſtians, even in that State of Perſecution, did enjoy many conſiderable Benefits and Advantages by it, ſo that they were not perpetually expoſed to popular Rage and Cruelty, and the violence of *Wicked and Unreaſonable Men*; Which would not only have *hindred the progreſs* of Chriſtianity, but would in a ſhort time have endangered *the extinguiſhing* of it: beſides that by the favour

favour and protection of Government, the Chriſtians had many conſiderable Intervals of Peace and Eaſe, which gave Chriſtianity a breathing time, and opportunity to recover it ſelf; and tho' the Secular Authority did for a long time diſcountenance Chriſtianity, and keep it under Hatches; that was but an accidental effect and abuſe of Government, and Obedience was ſtill due, and Prayers for it ſo much the more neceſſary, yea and Thankſgivings to God for it very reaſonable, upon account of the common Benefits and Advantages of it to Humane Society.

Beſides that Chriſtians did hope and believe, that the Civil Government might in time be gained, to give its countenance and aſſiſtance to Chriſtianity, and *that Kings and Princes might become nurſing Fathers to the Church*, as was expreſly foretold by the Prophets, and afterwards in God's due time was remarkably accompliſht. In the mean time, Chriſtians were patiently to obey and ſuffer, in expectation of thoſe Glorious Rewards in another World, which were promiſed to their Faith and Patience; and to pray for the Pow-

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ers that perſecuted them, that *they* alſo *might be brought to the acknowledgment of the Truth*, and might uſe that Power which God had committed to them, for the protection of Truth and Innocency, and for the Continuance and Support of the true Religion; which, bleſſed be God, was afterwards the caſe of Chriſtianity, for ſeveral Ages. I proceed in the

*Second* Place, to ſhew what Obligation the Conſideration of the mighty Benefits and Advantages of Government lays upon us, both to pray to God on the behalf of Princes and Governours, and likewiſe to praiſe God for them.

Becauſe in their Welfare and Proſperity the publick Peace and Happineſs doth chiefly conſiſt, and in the publick good conſiſts the good of particular Perſons; and above all, the Piety and Goodneſs of Princes and Magiſtrates (eſpecially thoſe who are in higheſt place of Authority) have a general good influence upon the Manners of Men, both for the diſcountenancing of Wickedneſs and Vice, and

for

for the encouragement of Religion and Virtue, which are the main Pillars and Foundation of publick Peace and Proſperity. *A King ſitting in the throne of judgment*, (ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 20. 8.) *ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes.* The Pattern of a Religious and good Prince is *a living Law* to his Subjects, and more than the Example of ten Thouſand others, to Mould and Faſhion the Manners of the People to a conformity to it.

Beſides that there is (as one expreſſeth it) a kind of *Moral* Connexion and Communication of Evil and of Guilt betwixt Princes and People, ſo that they are many times mutually Rewarded for the Virtues and good Actions, and Puniſhed for the Sins and Faults of one another. Of which proceedings of the Divine Juſtice towards the People of *Iſrael*, there are many remarkable inſtances in Scripture, where God Rewarded the Piety of Good Princes, with great Bleſſings upon their People, and Puniſht the Perſonal Faults of their Kings, with Publick Judgments upon the whole Nation. So that in Truth, it is the greateſt Kindneſs and Charity

ty to our ſelves, to pray for our Princes and Governours; becauſe *our* welfare is involved in *theirs*, and we ſuffer not only in all the Misfortunes and Calamities which befal them, but many times upon account of their Perſonal Faults and Miſcarriages. *Quicquid delirant Reges, plectuntur Achivi*, the Extravagancies of Princes are puniſht in the Misfortunes of their Subjects. Thus *David*, (otherwiſe a very good King,) ſinned in Numbring the People, and the Plague fell upon *them*; he was Puniſht in the Calamity of his People. And this was in no wiſe unjuſt, becauſe there are always Sins enough in any Nation to deſerve Puniſhment, and God may take what occaſion he pleaſes, to ſend his Judgments upon them that deſerve them; for Princes and People make but one Civil and Political body, and what part of it ſoever is puniſhed, the other ſuffers. And this is the true Ground and Reaſon of the Communication of Puniſhments betwixt Princes and People.

Another Conſiderarion which ſhould engage us *to pray for thoſe that are in authority*, is, that we reap the great benefit

benefit of their Care, and Pains, and vigilancy for us, *under their ſhadow we are ſafe*. Our Innocency and our Rights are protected by their Power and Laws, and by the juſt Puniſhments which they inflict upon evil-doers, and upon thoſe who go about to violate our rights in any kind; ſo that we ought to pray and to praiſe God for them, as our great *Benefactors*, and the chief Inſtruments of our Security and Welfare; and therefore not only in *Duty*, but in *Juſtice* and *Gratitude*, we are bound to wiſh all good to them, and to intercede with God for them, for the Peace and Proſperity of their Government, and to bleſs God on their behalf: yea, we ought to do this out of love to our ſelves; becauſe *their* good and proſperity is *ours*, *their* Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, *their* perſonal Piety and Virtues extend to *us*, and have a Mighty influence upon us, to excite and encourage us to follow their good Example, and *to go and do likewiſe*.

And we ought likewiſe to do this, out of Charity and Compaſſion to our Princes and Governours, whoſe Condition

dition is in truth rather to be pityed than envied, and whoſe high place and dignity is much more to be dreaded, than deſired by a wiſe Man, conſidering how heavy a Burden they ſuſtain, what Dangers they are continually expoſed to, what Cares and Troubles and Cenſures they daily undergo, for our ſafety and eaſe. So that whatever Ambitious and Inconſiderate Men may *think*, wiſe Men do certainly *know* and find by experience, that to diſcharge with care and faithfulneſs all the parts of a good Governour, is a very difficult and troubleſome Province. Inferiour Magiſtrates find care and trouble enough, in that ſmall ſhare and part of it which they ſuſtain; and if ſo, then certainly the Care and Concernment of *the whole*, muſt needs be a heavy Burden indeed; and what Abilities are ſufficient for it, what ſhoulders are ſtrong enough to ſtand under it!

And as upon this account they have the greateſt need of our Prayers, for Gods Direction and Aſſiſtance in the diſcharge of their high Office, ſo likewiſe for his powerful Grace to preſerve

ſerve them from Sin and Evil, in the midſt of thoſe manifold Temptations to which they are continually expoſed, in appearance much beyond other Men, from the heighth of their Condition, and the extent of their Power, which are ſtrong Temptations to weak Minds, to Pride and Inſolency, to Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; from the abundance of all things, which Miniſter to Luxury and Exceſs; and from the officious ſervility of *Paraſites* and *Flatterers*, who ſooth them in their Faults, and humour them in their Paſſions, and comply with their Corrupt and Vicious Inclinations, and are always ready at hand, and forward Inſtruments to execute their Commands, and to ſerve their Luſts and Vices.

And as Princes greatly need our Prayers upon theſe Accounts; ſo it is juſt Matter of Praiſe and Thankfulneſs to God, when a Nation hath wiſe, juſt, and good Princes, who lay to heart the Intereſts of their People, and endeavour by all the wiſe Methods and honeſt Arts of Government, effectually to procure it; who by their Authority and due Execution of the

Law, do diſcountenance, and, as much as in them lies, reſtrain Wickedneſs and Vice; and by their own Example encourage Virtue and Piety in their Subjects; and thereby invite, and even provoke them to the like Practices: The life of a good Prince is a kind of *Publick Cenſure* of ill Manners, and reproof of vicious Practices. And I do not know whether there be a more delightful Sight on this ſide Heaven, than to ſee thoſe who are in Eminent Place and Power, even if they might do whatever they would, yet continually chuſing to do what they ought; as if their Power were ſo far from being a Temptation to them to do Evil, that on the contrary, the Conſideration of it is one of the beſt and ſtrongeſt Arguments to reſtrain them from it.

Weak Minds are apt to meaſure their *Liberty* by their *Power*, and to think that the higher and greater they are, ſo much the greater Priviledge they have to be more extravagantly bad than others: but if the Matter be really conſidered, the Argument runs the other way; and he that Reaſons wiſely,

wiſely, will certainly conclude with *Tully, in maximâ quâque fortunâ minimum licere, that they who are in the higheſt Station, and greateſt Power, have of all others the leaſt liberty to do what they liſt.* Their Power, ſuppoſing it never ſo uncontrolable and unaccountable, would be ſo far from being in Reaſon a Temptation to them to do what they ought not, that in truth it would ſet them above the Temptation of doing an ill thing; becauſe they would ſtand in awe of no body, and there would be nothing that could hinder them from doing what is beſt, if they had a mind to it; and every one ought to have ſuch a mind: And nothing can be more miſ-becoming, and more directly contrary to the Nature of their Office, and the Power wherewith they are intruſted, than to give an Example of breaking thoſe Laws, which they are to ſee put in Execution.

God himſelf, becauſe he hath *all Power*, is therefore *all Goodneſs*, and is therefore *holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works*; according to the reaſoning of the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, who Argues thus with God, *It is not* (ſays

he) *agreeable with thy Power, to condemn him that hath not deſerved to be puniſhed*; that is, it is not agreeable with infinite Power, to do any thing that is unjuſt; *for thy Power* (ſaith he to God,) *is the beginning of righteouſneſs, and becauſe thou art the Lord of all, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all.* Infinite Power is the Foundation and Principle of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, and an All-powerful Being is Good and Righteous, not only from *Choice*, but from *a Neceſſity of Nature.*

And this is the true Ground and Reaſon of *that Saying* of St. *James*, that *God cannot be Tempted with Evil*; becauſe his infinite Power ſets him above all Temptation to it: For what Reaſon can be imagined, why he that hath all Power ſhould have any inclination to be otherwiſe than good? What can tempt him thereto? Since he that hath all Power can neither have any hopes of being greater than he is, nor any fear of becoming leſs: And all Temptation is founded either in hope or fear, and where neither of theſe can have any place, there can be no occaſion, no poſſible Motive or Temptation

Temptation to Evil; for *to be Evil*, and *to do Evil*, is always an Effect of *weakneſs* and *want of Power*.

The ſumm of what I have ſaid upon this Argument, and the deſign indeed of it, is to ſhew, that the greater Power and Authority any one hath, the leſs Liberty he hath to do any thing that is bad. And I have been the larger upon this, becauſe I would fain imprint upon the Minds of Perſons, whom the Providence of God hath inveſted with great Power and Authority, that as they have great opportunities of doing more good than others, ſo they have greater Reaſon, and more Advantages of doing it, and are more inexcuſable if they do any thing that is bad; not only becauſe their Actions are of a more publick influence and obſervation; but becauſe their Temptations to Evil, how great ſoever they may ſeem to be, are in truth and reality much leſs than other Mens. Happy are thoſe Princes, that wiſely conſider this, and make their Power and Authority over others, an Argument to be ſo much better themſelves, and to do ſo much more good to others; and be-

cauſe they are leſs ſubject to *the coercive Power of Law*, do for that Reaſon think themſelves ſo much the more obliged to be *a Law to themſelves*. Bleſſed be God for the Happineſs which we enjoy in this reſpect; and let us earneſtly beſeech him, that he would be pleaſed to beſtow ſuch a plentiful meaſure of his Grace and Holy Spirit, on our moſt Gracious King and Queen, as may Effectually both engage and enable them to uſe their Power to the beſt purpoſes for *the Publick good.*

And thus I have briefly gone over, and explained to you, the ſeveral Particulars in *the Text*; *the duty of Prayer* here enjoyned; *for whom* we are to pray, in general *for all Men*; and for whom more eſpecially, and *in the firſt place*; *for Kings, and all that are in authority*; and *upon what Conſiderations* we are to Pray for them, and to Praiſe God in their behalf; becauſe of the great Benefits we receive by them; and becauſe both in reſpect of the Dangers and Difficulties of their Condition, they ſtand in need of our Prayers above other Men; beſides that in praying

praying for their Welfare and Proſperity, we pray for our own Peace and Happineſs.

And now to *apply* this to our ſelves, and to the Occaſion of *this Day*. By all that hath been ſaid, we cannot but be convinced, what Cauſe we have to bleſs God for *that happy Government* which we live under, *that excellent Conſtitution*, under the gentle Influences whereof *we* enjoy more Liberty, more Plenty, and more Security from all manner of Injury and Oppreſſion, than *any Nation* this Day on the Face of the Earth. Therefore with what Thankfulneſs ſhould we *this Day* commemorate the happy Reſtauration of this Government to us, after the miſerable Diſtractions and Confuſions of twenty Years, by the Reſtauration and Return of our baniſht *Soveraign*, in ſo peaceable, and yet ſo wonderful a Manner, that a Remembrance of it, even at this Diſtance, is almoſt ſtill Matter of Amazement to us!

*Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who alone doth wondrous Things.*

And with our joyful Praiſes, let us joyn our moſt devout and fervent Prayers to Almighty God, *for the King's and Queen's Majeſties, and for all that are in Authority.* And I may truly ſay, that there was hardly ever greater Reaſon and Occaſion for it, both from our Diſtractions at Home, and our Dangers from abroad; never was there greater Need of our earneſt Supplications and Prayers, than at *this* Time, when our Armies and Fleets are in Motion, and when God ſeems already to have given us ſome Earneſt of good Succeſs; bleſſed be his great and glorious Name.

We have indeed a great Army, and a more powerful Fleet, than ever this Nation ſent forth; but unleſs God be on our Side, and favour our Cauſe, in vain are all our Preparations; for whenever his Providence is pleaſed to interpoſe, *by ſtrength ſhall no Man prevail.* Have we not Reaſon then to *cry mightily unto God*, when the only Strength of the Nation is at Stake, when our Sins and Provocations are ſo many and great, and there

there lyes ſo heavy a poal of Guilt upon us? When the perſon of his Sacred Majeſty is expoſed to ſo much Hazard, not only *in the high Places of the Field*, but from the *reſtleſs Attempts* of the malicious and implacable Enemies of our Peace and Religion, *that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to go forth with our Armies and Fleets*, and *not remember our Iniquities againſt us, but ſave us for his Mercies ſake?*

We are too apt to murmur and complain of Miſcariages, and the ill management of Affairs; but ſurely the beſt thing we can do, and that which beſt becomes us, is to look forward, and to turn our Cenſures of our Governours and their Actions, into humble Supplications to God in their behalf, and in behalf of the whole Nation; *that he would be pleaſed to turn us every one from the Evil of our Ways, that he may return to us, and have mercy on us, that ſo Iniquity may not be our Ruin; that he may rejoyce over us to do us Good, and may at laſt think Thoughts of Peace towards us, Thoughts of Good and not of Evil, to give us an expected End of our Troubles.*

Let us then betake our ſelves to the proper Work of *this Day*, hearty *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings to Almighty God, for the King and Queen, and for all that are in Authority; that as he hath been pleaſed, by a wonderful Providence, to reſcue us from the imminent danger we were in, and from all our fears, by the happy Advancement of their Majeſties to the Throne of theſe Kingdoms; ſo he would of his infinite goodneſs ſtill preſerve and continue to us* this Light of our Eyes, and Breath of our Noſtrils, *Princes of that great Clemency and Goodneſs, which render them the true Repreſentatives of God upon Earth, and the moſt Gracious Governours of Men.*

And let us earneſtly beſeech him, *that he would confirm and ſtrengthen them in all goodneſs, and make them wiſe as Angels of God, to diſcern betwixt Good and Evil, that they may know how to go in and out before this great People; that he would give them the united affections of their People, and a heart to ſtudy and ſeek their good all the days of their lives.*

And

And Finally, *That he would be pleaſed to continue ſo great a Bleſſing to us, and to grant them a long and proſperous Reign over us*; *and that their Poſterity in this Royal Family may endure for ever*, and their Throne as the Days of Heaven; *that under them the People of theſe Nations, we and the Generations to come*, may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godlineſs and honeſty; *for his Mercies ſake in Jeſus Chriſt*, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords; *To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, now and for ever.* Amen.

A

# SERMON

Preached in the Chapel at *Lambeth-Houſe*,

ON

## Chriſtmas-Day, 1691.

1 JOHN IV. 9.

*In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

THeſe Words contain a clear and evident Demonſtration of the Love of God to us; *in this was manifeſted the Love of God towards us*;

*us*; (that is) by this it plainly appears, that God had a mighty Love for us, *that he ſent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* In which we may conſider this Three-fold Evidence of God's Love to Mankind.

I. That he ſhould be pleaſed to take our Caſe into Conſideration, and to concern himſelf for our Happineſs.

II. That he ſhould deſign ſo great a Benefit to us, which is here expreſt by Life; *that we might live through him.*

III. That he was pleaſed to uſe ſuch a Means for the obtaining and procuring of this Benefit for us; *he ſent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* Each of theſe ſingly is a great Evidence of God's Love to us; much more all of them together.

I. It is a great Evidence of the Love of God to Man-kind, that he was pleaſed to take our Caſe into Conſide-

Conſideration, and to concern himſelf for our Happineſs. Nothing does more commend an Act of Kindneſs, than if there be great Condeſcenſion in it. We uſe to value a ſmall Favour, if it be done to us by one that is far above us, more than a far greater, done to us by a mean and inconſiderable Perſon. This made *David* to break out into ſuch Admiration, when he conſidered the ordinary Providence of God towards Mankind, *Lord, what is Man, that thou art mindful of him! or the Son of Man, that thou ſhouldſt conſider him!* This is a wonderful Condeſcenſion indeed, for *God* to be mindful of *Man.*

At the beſt we are but his Creatures, and upon that very Account at an infinite Diſtance from him; ſo that were not he infinitely good, he would not be concerned for us, who are ſo infinitely beneath the Conſideration of his Love and Pity. Neither are we of the higheſt Rank of Creatures; we are much below the Angels, as to the Excellency and Perfection of our Beings; ſo that if God had not had a peculiar Pity and Regard

Regard to the Sons of Men, he might have placed his Affection and Care, upon a much nobler Order of Creatures than we are, and ſo much the more miſerable, becauſe they fell from a higher Step of Happineſs, I mean the loſt Angels; but yet for Reaſons beſt known to his Infinite Wiſdom, God paſt by them, and was pleaſed to conſider *us*. This the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* takes notice of, as an Argument of God's peculiar and extraordinary Love to Mankind, that *he ſent his Son, not to take upon him the Nature of Angels, but of the Seed of Abraham.*

Now that *he*, who is ſo far above us, and, after that we by wilful Tranſgreſſion had loſt our ſelves, had no Obligation to take Care of us, but what his own Goodneſs laid upon him, that he ſhould concern himſelf ſo much for us, and be ſo ſolicitous for our Recovery, this is a great Evidence of his Kindneſs and Goodwill to us, and cannot be imagined to proceed from any other Cauſe.

II. Another

II. Another Evidence of God's great Love to us, is, that he was pleaſed to deſign ſo great a Benefit for us. This the Scripture expreſſeth to us by *Life*, and it is uſual in Scripture to expreſs the beſt and moſt deſirable things by *Life*; becauſe as it is one of the greateſt Bleſſings, ſo it is the Foundation of all other Enjoyments: And therefore the Apoſtle uſeth but this one word, to expreſs to us all the Bleſſings and Benefits of Chriſt's coming into the World; *God ſent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

And this Expreſſion is very proper to our Caſe; becauſe *Life* ſignifies the reparation of all that which was loſt by the Fall of Man: For Man, by his willful Degeneracy and Apoſtacy from God, is ſunk into a State of Sin and Miſery, both which the Scripture is wont to expreſs by *Death*. In reſpect of our Sinful State we are Spiritually Dead; and in reſpect of the Puniſhment and Miſery due to us for our Sins, we are Judicially Dead, Dead

in Law; for *the wages of Sin is Death.* Now God hath ſent his Son into the World, that in both theſe reſpects *we might live through him.*

1. We were ſpiritually Dead, Dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Eph. 2. 1, 2. *You hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wherein in times paſt ye walked, according to the courſe of this world.* Every Wicked Man, tho' in a Natural Senſe he be Alive, yet in a Moral Senſe he is Dead. So the Apoſtle ſpeaking of thoſe *who live in ſinful Luſts and Pleaſures,* ſays of them, that *they are dead while they live,* 1 *Tim.* 5, 6. What Corrupt Humours are to the Body, that Sin is to the Soul, their Diſeaſe and their Death. Now God ſent his Son to deliver us from this Death, by renewing our Nature, and mortifying our Luſts; by reſtoring us to the Life of Grace and Holineſs, and *deſtroying the Body of Sin in us, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin.* And that this is a great Argument of the mighty Love of God to us, the Apoſtle tells us, Eph. 2. 4, 5. *God who is rich in mercy, for his great love*

*love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt.* It is an Argument of the Riches of God's Mercy, and of his great Love to us, to recover us out of this ſad and deplorable Caſe. It is a kindneſs infinitely greater, than to redeem us from the moſt wretched Slavery, or to reſcue us from the moſt dreadful and cruel Temporal Death; and yet we ſhould value this as a Favour and Benefit, that could never be ſufficiently acknowledg'd: but God hath ſent his Son to deliver us from a worſe Bondage, and a more dreadful kind of Death; ſo that well might the Apoſtle aſcribe this great deliverance of Mankind from the ſlavery of our Luſts, and the Death of Sin, to the boundleſs Mercy and Love of God to us. *God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickned us together with Chriſt, even when we were dead in Sins*; when our caſe was as deſperate as could well be imagined; then was God pleaſed to undertake this great Cure, and to provide ſuch a Remedy as cannot fail to

be effectual for our Recovery, if we will but make uſe of it.

2. We were likewiſe judicially Dead, Dead in Law, being Condemned by the juſt Sentence of it. So ſoon as ever we ſinned, eternal Death was by the Sentence of God's Law become our due Portion and Reward; and this being our caſe, God, in tender Commiſeration and Pity to Mankind, was pleaſed to ſend his Son into the world, to interpoſe between the Juſtice of God, and the Demerits of Men; and by reverſing the Sentence that was gone out againſt us, and procuring a Pardon for us, to reſcue us from the Miſery of Eternal Death; and not only ſo, but upon the condition of Faith and Repentance, of Obedience and a Holy Life, to beſtow Eternal Life upon us; and by this means to reſtore us to a better Condition than that from which we were fallen, and to advance us to a Happineſs greater than that of Innocency.

And was not this great love, to deſign and provide ſo great a Benefit and Bleſſing

Bleſſing for us, *to ſend his Son Jeſus to bleſs us, in turning away every one of us from our Iniquities?* Our Bleſſed Saviour, who came from *the boſom of his Father*, and knew his tender Affection and Compaſſion to Mankind, ſpeaks of this as a moſt wonderful and unparallell'd expreſſion of his love to us, John 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son. God ſo loved the world,* ſo greatly, ſo ſtrangely, ſo beyond our biggeſt hopes, nay, ſo contrary to all reaſonable expectation, *as to ſend his only-begotten Son, to ſeek and to ſave* the ſinful Sons of Men.

If it had only in general been declared to us, that God was about to ſend his Son into the world upon ſome great Deſign, and been left to us to conjecture, what his Errand and Buſineſs ſhould be; how would this have alarmed the guilty Conſciences of ſinful Men, and fill'd them with infinite Jealouſies and Suſpicion, with fearful expectations of *Wrath and fiery Indignation to conſume them*! For conſidering the great Wickedneſs and Degenera-

cy of Mankind, what could we have thought, but that ſurely God was ſending his Son upon a deſign of Vengeance, to chaſtiſe a ſinful World, to vindicate the Honour of his deſpiſed Laws, and to revenge the multiplyed Affronts which had been offered to the higheſt Majeſty of Heaven, by his pitiful and ungrateful Creatures? Our own guilt would have been very apt to have fill'd us with ſuch Imaginations as theſe, that in all likelihood the Son of God was coming to Judgment, to call the wicked World to an Account, to proceed againſt his Father's Rebels, to paſs Sentence upon them, and to Execute the Vengeance which they had deſerved. This we might juſtly have dreaded; and indeed conſidering our caſe, how ill we have deſerved at God's hands, and how highly we have provoked him; what other weighty Matter could we hope for?

But the goodneſs of God hath ſtrangely out-done our Hopes, and deceived our Expectation; ſo it follows in the next words, *God ſent not his Son*

*Son into the world, to condemn the world,* (intimating that this we might juſtly have imagin'd and feared) but upon a quite contrary deſign, *that through him the world might be ſaved.* What a ſurprize of kindneſs is here! that inſtead of *ſending his Son to condemn us,* he ſhould *ſend him into the world to ſave us*; to reſcue us from the Jaws of Death and of Hell, from that Eternal and Intolerable Miſery, which we had incurred and deſerved!

And if he had proceeded no farther, this had been wonderful Mercy and Kindneſs: but his love ſtopt not here, it was not contented to ſpare us, and free us from Miſery; but was reſtleſs till it had found out a way to bring us to Happineſs; for *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,* not only *that whoſoever believes in him might not periſh,* but *might have everlaſting life.* This is the *ſecond* Evidence of God's great Love to us, the greatneſs of the Bleſſing and Benefit which he hath deſigned and provided for us, *that we might live through him*; not only be delivered from Spi-

ritual and Eternal Death; but be made partakers of Eternal Life.

III. The laſt Evidence of God's great Love to us, which I mentioned, was this, that God was pleaſed to uſe ſuch a Means, for the obtaining and procuring of this great Bleſſing and Benefit; *he ſent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* And this will appear to be great Love indeed, if we conſider theſe *Four* things.

1. The Perſon whom he was pleaſed to employ upon this Deſign; *he ſent his only-begotten Son.*

2. How much he abaſed him, in Order to the effecting and accompliſhing of this Deſign, implyed in theſe words, *he ſent him into the World.*

3. If we conſider to whom he was ſent, to *the World.* And,

4. That he did all this voluntarily and freely, out of his meer Pity and Goodneſs; not conſtrain'd hereto

hereto by any Neceſſity, not prevail'd upon by any Application or Importunity of ours, nor oblig'd by any Benefit or Kindneſs from us.

1. Let us conſider the Perſon whom God was pleaſed to employ in this Deſign, *he ſent his only-begotten Son*; no leſs Perſon than *his own Son*, and no leſs dear to him, than *his only-begotten Son.*

1. No leſs Perſon than *his own Son*; and the Dignity of the Perſon that was employed in our behalf, doth ſtrangely heighten and ſet off the Kindneſs. What an Endearment is it of the Mercy of our Redemption, that God was pleaſed to employ upon this Deſign no meaner Perſon than *his own Son, his begotten Son*; ſo he is call'd in the the Text, *his Son*, in ſo peculiar a Manner *as no Creature is, or can be*; the Creatures below Man are call'd the Works of God, but never his Children; the Angels are in Scripture call'd the Sons of God; and *Adam* likewiſe is call'd the Son of God, becauſe God made him after

after his own Image and Likeneſs, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and in his Dominion and Soveraignty over the Creatures below him: but this Title of *begotten Son of God* was never given to any of the Creatures, Man or Angel; for *unto which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, as the Apoſtle reaſons, *Heb.* 1. 5. He muſt be a great Perſon indeed, to whom this Title belongs, of *the begotten Son of God*; and it muſt be a mighty Love indeed, which moved God to employ ſo great a Perſon, on the behalf of ſo pitiful and wretched Creatures as we are. It had been a mighty Condeſcenſion for God to treat with us at all; but that no leſs Perſon than *his own Son* ſhould be the Embaſſadour, is an aſtoniſhing Regard of Heaven to poor ſinful Duſt and Aſhes.

2. This Perſon was as dear to God, as he was great; he was *his only-begotten Son.* It had been a great Inſtance of *Abraham*'s Love and Obedience to God, to have ſacrificed

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*a Son* at his Command; but this Circumſtance makes it much greater, that it was *his only Son*; *hereby I know that thou feareſt God* (ſays the Angel) *ſince thou haſt not with-held thy Son, thine only Son from me.* This is a Demonſtration that God loved us at a ſtupendous rate, when he would ſend *his only-begotten Son* into the World for us.

Before this, God had tryed ſeveral Ways with Mankind, and employed ſeveral Meſſengers to us; ſometimes he ſent his Angels, and many times his Servants the Prophets: *but in theſe laſt Days he hath ſent his Son.* He had many more Servants to have employed upon this Meſſage, but he had but *one Son*; and rather than Mankind ſhould be ruined and loſt, he would ſend him. Such was the love of God towards us, that rather than our Recovery ſhould not be effected, he would employ in this Work the greateſt and deareſt Perſon to him both in Heaven and Earth, *his only-begotten Son*; *in this was the Love of God manifeſted, that*

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*that*

*that he ſent his only-begotten Son, that we might live through him.*

2. Let us conſider how much this glorious and excellent Perſon was abaſed, in Order to the effecting and accompliſhing of this Deſign, which is here expreſt by *ſending him into the World*; and this comprehends his Incarnation, with all the mean and abaſing Circumſtances of it. This the Apoſtle declares fully to us, *Phil.* 2. 6, 7. tho' *he was in the Form of God*, (that is truly and really God) *yet he made himſelf of no Reputation*, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωτε, *he empty'd himſelf*, was contented to be ſtrangely leſſen'd and diminiſh'd, *and took upon him the Form of a Servant*, or Slave, *and was made in the likeneſs of Men*; that is, did really aſſume Humane Nature. Here was an Abaſement indeed, for God to become Man, for *the only-begotten Son of God to take upon him the Form of a Servant, and to become obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, which was the Death of Slaves, and famous Malefactors. Here was Love indeed, that God was willing that his

his own dear Son ſhould be thus obſcured and diminiſhed, and become ſo mean and ſo miſerable for our ſakes; that he ſhould not only ſtoop *to be made Man, and to dwell among us*; but that he ſhould likewiſe ſubmit to *the infirmities of our Nature, and to be made in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted*; that he ſhould be contented to bear ſo many Affronts and Indignities from perverſe and unthankful Men, and *to endure ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*; that *he who was the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, ſhould be *deſpiſed and rejected of Men, a Man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs*, and rather than we ſhould periſh, ſhould put himſelf into our Place, and be contented to ſuffer and die for us; and that God ſhould be willing that all this ſhould be done to *his only Son*, to ſave Sinners. What greater Teſtimony could he give of his Love to us!

3. Let us conſider farther to whom he was ſent, which is alſo implyed in theſe Words, *he ſent his Son into the world*; into a wicked world, that was altogether

gether unworthy of him; and to an ungrateful World, that did moſt unworthily uſe him.

*Firſt*, Into a wicked World, that was altogether unworthy of him, that had deſerved no ſuch Kindneſs at his Hands. For what were *we*, that God ſhould ſend ſuch a Perſon amongſt us, that he ſhould make his Son ſtoop ſo low, as to dwell in our Nature, and to become *one of us?* We were Rebels and Enemies, *Enemies to God by evil Works*, up in Arms againſt Heaven, and at open Defiance with God our Maker. When the World was in this Poſture of Enmity and Hoſtility againſt God; then he ſent his Son to treat with us, and to offer us Peace. What can more commend the love of God, than this, that he ſhould ſhew ſuch Kindneſs to us, when we were Sinners and Enemies! Herein *God hath commended his Love towards us*, (ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 5. 8.) in that *whilſt we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us.*

*Secondly*, Into an ungrateful World, that

that did moſt unworthily uſe him, that gave no becoming Entertainment to him (*the Foxes had Holes, and the Birds of the Air had Neſts; but the Son of Man had not where to lay his Head*) that heaped all manner of Contumelies and Indignities upon him, that perſecuted him all his Life, and at laſt put him to a moſt painful and ſhameful Death; in a word, that was ſo far from receiving him as *the Son of God*, that they did not treat him with common Humanity, and like *one of the Sons of Men.*

4. He did all this voluntarily and freely; *God ſent his Son into the World, mero motu*, of his own meer Grace and Goodneſs, moved by nothing but his own Bowels, and the Conſideration of our Miſery; not overpowered by any Force; (for what could offer Violence to him *to whom all Power belongs*?) not conſtrain'd by any Neceſſity, for he had been happy, tho' we had remained for ever miſerable; he might have choſen other Objects of his Love and Pity, and have left us involv'd in that Miſery, which

we

we had wilfully brought upon our ſelves.

Nor was he prevail'd upon by any Application from us, or importunity of ours to do this for us. Had we been left to have contrived the way of our Recovery; this which God hath done for us, could never have entred into the Heart of Man to have imagin'd, much leſs to have deſir'd it at his Hands. If the way of our Salvation had been put into the Hands of our own Counſel and Choice, how could we have been ſo impudent as to have begg'd of God, that *his only Son* might deſcend from Heaven, and *become Man*, be poor, deſpiſed, and miſerable for our ſakes? God may ſtoop as low as he pleaſeth, being ſecure of his own Majeſty and Greatneſs; but it had been a Boldneſs in us, not far from Blaſphemy, to have deſired of him to condeſcend to ſuch a ſubmiſſion.

Nor, *laſtly*, was he pre-oblig'd by any Kindneſs or Benefit from us; ſo far from that, that we had given him all

all poſſible Provocation to the contrary, and had Reaſon to expect the Effect of his heavieſt Diſpleaſure: and yet though *he* was the *pars læſa*, the party that had been diſoblig'd and injured; tho' *we* were firſt in the Offence and Provocation; *he* was pleaſed to make the firſt Overtures of Peace and Reconciliation; and tho' it was wholly *our* Concernment, and not *his*; yet he was pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far to our Perverſeneſs and Obſtinacy, as *to ſend his Son to us*, and *to beſeech us to be reconciled.*

Now *herein*, (ſays the Apoſtle, immediately after the *Text*) *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins*: Herein is the Love of God manifeſted, that the kindneſs began on *his* part, and not on *ours*; that being neither obliged nor deſired by us, he did freely and of his own accord, *ſend his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

What now remains, but to apply this to our ſelves?

1. Let us propound to our ſelves the Love of God for our Pattern and Example. This is the Inference which the Apoſtle makes in the next Verſe but one after the *Text*, *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.* One would have thought the Inference ſhould have been, *if God ſo loved us, then we ought alſo to love him.* But the Apoſtle doth not ſpeak ſo much of the Affection, as the Effect of Love; and his meaning is, if God hath beſtowed ſuch Benefits upon us, we ought, in imitation of him, to be kind and beneficial one to another. Not but that we ought *to love God with all our hearts, and ſouls, and ſtrength*; but in this Senſe we are not capable of it. We cannot be beneficial to him; becauſe he is ſelf-ſufficient, and ſtands in need of nothing; and therefore the Apoſtle adds this as a Reaſon, why he does not Exhort Men to love God, but one another; *no man hath ſeen God at any time*; he is not ſenſible to us, and therefore none of theſe ſenſible things can ſignifie any thing to him. But he hath Friends and Relations here in the world,

world, who are capable of the ſenſible Effects of our Love, and to whom we may ſhew kindneſs for his ſake; we cannot be beneficial to God, but we may teſtifie our Love to him, by our Kindneſs and Charity to Men, who are made after the Image of God; and if we ſee any one Miſerable, that is conſideration enough to move our Charity. There was nothing but this in us to move him to Pity us, *when we were in our blood, and no eye pitied us.*

God is a Pattern of the moſt generous Kindneſs and Charity. Tho' he be infinitely above us, yet he thought it not below him to conſider our caſe, and to employ his only Son to ſave us; he had no Obligation to us, no Expectation of Advantage from us, and can never be in a poſſibility to ſtand in need of us; and yet he loved us, and hath conferred the greateſt Benefits upon us. So that no Man can have deſerved ſo ill at our hands, but that if he be in want, and we in a condition to help him, he ought to come

within the Compaſs and Conſideration of our Charity.

And *this* is the proper Seaſon for it, when we commemorate the greateſt Bleſſing and Benefit that was ever conferred on Mankind, *the Son of God ſent into the world, on purpoſe to redeem and ſave us.* And therefore I cannot but very much commend the Cuſtom of feeding and relieving the Poor, more eſpecially at *this time*, when the Poor do uſually ſtand moſt in need of it, and when we commemorate *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who being rich became poor for our ſakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich.*

2. Let us readily comply with the great Deſign of this great Love of God to Mankind. *He hath ſent his Son, that we might live through him.* But tho' he had done all this for us, tho' he hath purchaſed ſo great Bleſſings for us, as the Pardon of our Sins, and Power againſt them, and Eternal Life and Happineſs; yet there is ſomething to be done on our parts, to make us Partakers

takers of theſe Benefits. God hath not ſo loved us, as to ſend his Son into the World, to carry Men to Heaven whether they will or no; and to reſcue thoſe from the ſlavery of the Devil, and the Damnation of Hell, who are fond of their Fetters, and wilfully run themſelves upon Ruin and Deſtruction. But the Son of God came to offer Happineſs to us, upon certain Terms and Conditions, ſuch as are fit for God to propound, and neceſſary for us to perform, to make us capable of the bleſſedneſs which he offers; as namely, *repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; a ſincere and conſtant Endeavour of Obedience to the Laws and Precepts of our Holy Religion.

Theſe are the Terms of the Goſpel; and *the Grace of God, which brings Salvation*, offers it only upon theſe Terms, *that we deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*: then we may *expect the bleſſed hope*. But if we will not ſubmit to theſe Conditions, the Son of God will be no Saviour to us; for *he is the Author*

*Author of Eternal Salvation* only *to them that obey him.* If Men will continue in their Sins, the Redemption wrought by Chriſt will be of no Advantage to them; ſuch as obſtinately perſiſt in an impenitent Courſe, *Ipſa ſi velit ſalus ſervare non poteſt, Salvation it ſelf cannot ſave them.*

Theſe are the Conditions of our Happineſs, and if we ſubmit to them we are *Heirs of Eternal Life*; if we refuſe, we are *Sons of Perdition*, eternally loſt and undone; for we may aſſure our ſelves, that theſe are the beſt and eaſieſt Terms that can ever be offered to us, becauſe God ſent them by *his Son.* This is the laſt Effort of the Divine Love and Goodneſs, towards the Recovery and Salvation of Men; ſo the Apoſtle tells us, *Heb.* 1. 1, 2. that *God, who at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpake to the fathers, by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son*; and if we refuſe to hear him, he will ſpeak no more. After this it is not to be expected, that God ſhould make any farther Attempts for our recovery; for he can ſend no greater nor dearer Perſon to us

us, than *his own Son*; and if we refuſe him, whom will we reverence? If after this we ſtill wilfully go on in our Sins; *there remains no more ſacrifice for Sin; but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to conſume us.*

3. With what Joy and Thankfulneſs ſhould we commemorate this great Love of God to Mankind, in *ſending his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him!*

This is the proper End of the Bleſſed Sacrament, which we are now going to receive, to repreſent to our Minds the Incarnation and Paſſion of our dear Lord, by the Symbols of his Body broken, and his Blood ſhed for us. With what acknowledgments ſhould we celebrate the Memory of this wonderful Love, which the Son of God hath ſhewn to the Sons of Men; endeavouring to make all the World in love with him, who hath ſo loved all Mankind!

When ever we ſee his Blood poured forth, and his Body broken for us, ſo moving

moving a ſight ſhould raiſe ſtrange Paſſions in us, of love to our Saviour, and hatred to our Sins; and ſhould inſpire us with mighty Reſolutions of Service and Obedience to him; and when ever the Pledges and Seals of theſe Benefits are delivered into our hands, the ſight of them ſhould at once wound and revive our hearts, and make us to cry out, *Lord, how unworthy am I, for whom thou ſhouldeſt do and ſuffer all this! I am overcome by thy love, and can no longer hold out, againſt the mighty force of ſuch kindneſs! I render my ſelf to thee, and will ſerve thee for ever, who haſt redeemed me at ſo dear a rate!*

*Now to him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was ſlain, to God even our Father, and to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the firſt begotten from the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth; unto him that hath loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts to God and his Father, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever,* Amen.

*FINIS.*